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THE THIRD DAUGHTER

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MRS. LU. WHEAT

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THE THIRD DAUGHTER

The THIRD DAUGHTER

A STORY *of* CHINESE HOME LIFE

By
MRS. LU. WHEAT

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To my son
and to the sons of all other women
this little book is dedicated
in motherly love.

SUMMARY.

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PREFACE.

The author of this little book does not for a moment hope to convey to the western mind any very accurate idea of the real Chinaman, nor of the Eurasian or half-breed who comes upon the stage wherever the white man sets his foot or pitches his tent, but if the reader shall gather from its pages even a little of the wisdom of the Far East and see its application to our western life, it will be recompense for weary days and long sea voyages.

"Poor old China" is poor old China, but she has honored her father and her mother and her days have been long in the land—longer than those of any other nation, and her children are still in splendid physical condition. Would you know the reason for her great age and for the patient endurance and the strength of her un-

told millions? It is this: for ages she has given attention to the rights of the unborn child. More than two thousand years ago Pan Chihi wrote a book which demanded in true motherly style that the women of China be given all the rights that would inure to the benefit of their offspring.

"Whatever protects the children," said this wise woman, "protects the nation."

There is no doubt in the mind of the writer that a great majority of the Chinese people have been more or less familiar, for many generations, with the laws that govern prenatal life and especially with the great law which points to the fact that the thoughts and acts of today shape the lives of generations to come. They were probably taught by the priests, twenty thousand years ago, to control their appetites because of the immeasurable damage that indulgence might do to their offspring. And who shall say whether, for that reason, they

may not be better fitted to survive, in the long run, than are we who have been left with no training on the subject. Thinkers who have lived long enough in the Far East to see beneath the surface of a civilization so far removed from us in thought, already predict that the future belongs to it. If the fate of nations hangs upon their fitness to produce sound children, it certainly looks as though we of the west might fall short in the final test. It may be that because of lack of knowledge a fatal weakness has developed in our physical machinery which will prove incompatible with long life and that, in time, we shall be exterminated by a race more fertile and more conscientious in its methods than we.

The serpent, that great symbol of sex wisdom, which stands for so much in the Asiatic mind, was perverted by our fathers into a symbol of evil, and it followed, logically, that the sex organs were surrounded by mystery and

suspicion, and our children left to grope in darkness toward the great office of parenthood. Among the ancient faiths of man, the serpent has ever stood for the sacredness of the creative act, and wherever we look among the so-called "heathen", we find this symbol of the passions respected and beloved.

Knowing but little, I have told but little, of a subject that has in it the latent power to re-shape the happenings of the world; a subject that has moods and tenses and inflections beyond the power of tongue to tell or pen to write.

MRS. LU. WHEAT.

Los Angeles, California.

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CHAPTER I.

"All, whether honorable or mean, talented or stupid, male or female, the eater of ordinary food or he who restricts himself to vegetables, the man who has left his family or he who remains at home, may worship Buddha."

—*Buddhist Tract.*

The Province of Honan in the north of China is noted for its great Tien Dong temple, a retreat situated in a mountain fastness and made sacred by the worship of ages. Hundreds of feet above the fertile plains which stretch, rice laden and flower laden, in every direction, the noble structure stands, a monument to the Buddhism that was, rather than to that which is.

The way up is not so hard as it first appears for the priests have carefully arranged the paths to avoid steep places and, knowing that

they who drink in the beauties of nature are forgetful of fatigue, have filled in the nooks and corners with trees and flowers.

On a pleasant day in the spring of 1880, the mountain side was dotted with Chinamen who were making their yearly pilgrimage to the temple and the whole landscape was aglow with joy. The throng was a motley one which anyone might join without fear of molestation or intolerance. Old age, calm and expectant, leaned heavily upon the arm of the young and the strong; poverty and rags brushed the rich silks of the mandarin, while here and there, the so-called "converted Chinamen" from the mission schools, told the wonderful story of Jesus. These, however, had been admonished by their teachers not to go to the temple, for the Christian missionaries prefer that their converts withdraw from attendance upon other forms of worship; yet, love for the old ways was so

burned into their souls, that they had disregarded the advice and joined the procession. One and all, tramped in single file up the steep mountain side, uttering from time to time the low, "Blessed be Buddha", or "The dew is on the lotus". Abstemiousness, concentration of thought and sacred ideas concerning the sex relations had so permeated the minds of the throng that no glance of the eye spoke of love; the infinite blue of the sky, the fragrant air, the whispering leaves, awakened in them no thought of the witchery of woman. Here and there, little parties gathered under the gnarled old trees, but they discussed the "tree spirits" or the insect music; and here and there, an astrologer stopped to impart his mysterious knowledge, but he gave no advice as to how to win a fair lady. This fact held good from the highest mandarin to the humblest peasant.

Neither was there any discussion of religious

beliefs; Taoism, with its far-fetched symbols and metaphors, Confucianism, with its moral code; Shinto with its ancestor worship and Christianity, with its Father in heaven, moved side by side and Buddhism claimed them all for her very own. Whether the "dewdrop slips into the shining sea", or whether "the sea slips into the dewdrop" made very little difference to these worshippers; for their creed was large enough to allow each man his individual opinions.

For ages uncounted there had been no destruction of life on the mountain, whether of bird, or of beast, whether of insect or of reptile. This scrupulous regard for life in whatever form had so imbued the habits of the priests that nothing showed signs of fear. The birds discharged their battery of song undisturbed; rabbits hopped along the path with unquestioning confidence; and rainbow tinted lizards darted from shelter to shelter.

In the vicinity of the buildings the very old trees were carefully propped up with bamboo poles that they might hold their places a little longer; hallowed by the worship of ages, the priests regarded them as too sacred to be neglected when their glory had departed, so tender hands guarded them and loving eyes were raised to them as they crumbled back to earth.

To the right of the path, carved out of the solid rock, was a lotus bed into which wounded reptiles might be placed to linger out their allotted time; for the lotus and the serpent are ever sacred in the symbology of the Asiatic man, the one as an emblem of purity, the other standing for wisdom. (Whether it be a fact or not, it is usually believed in Asia that the lotus propagates without the pollen form another flower; hence the Buddha being the son of a virgin, is always represented in art as sitting upon a lotus flower. The serpent also repre-

sents sex wisdom, by which there is an ever increasing beauty and intelligence in man, until sex becomes obliterated.)

Much etiquette was observed by the pilgrims toward one another until they came within sound of the chanting priests, then all walked silently with downcast eyes and palms pressed closely together.

The monastery, with its eight hundred idols, occupied about seven acres of ground, all of which was most economically arranged with reference to the food supply of the occupants. Gardens of fresh vegetables, mushroom beds, and thousands upon thousands of lotus bulbs, grew luxuriously; while scattered about the grounds in nooks and corners were the idols—some with fierce, glaring eyes to remind the worshipper of the struggles of life, others expressing the calm repose of those who have entered the "noble eight-fold path". As the

throng became more dense it separated into little groups, each of which sought out its favorite idol and paid its devotions. Those who were potters by trade bowed before a green porcelain God, while the farmers gathered before a harvest queen. The literati also paid their devotions to a female deity, while amidst all and over all, the Blessed Buddha sat upon his lotus leaf and told in his countenance a story of the calm repose which comes to those who master the fierce desires of earth. Far up the path in a nook almost hidden by foliage was a statue of Hirati, a stone image with the face of a comely woman. Against her breast she supported a naked babe and in her hand she held a full blown lily. (This figure, so like the Blessed Mother of our own religious art, is pre-Christian by many centuries. The legend of Hirati, however, is one of evolution, carried further than the boldest scientist of the west would

dare go. It tells us that for sins committed in a previous incarnation, Hirati was born a demon with such wicked impulses that she devoured her own offspring; but that under the beneficent teaching of the gentle Buddha, all her sins were transmuted into goodness and she was given power over the sex of the unborn. Hence there is an ever increasing throng of young people before her, asking that they may be blessed with sons.)

It was before this idol that the smoke of costly incense was wafted up toward the blue sky and a Chinaman, evidently of the better class, breathed out to the powers above him the burden of a prayer. To an observer the story told itself. A man of elegant bearing had come to beseech the Goddess on behalf of a child as yet unborn, to beseech her to use her good office that the child might be a son—a son to insure the succession of worship at his ances-

tral tombs and to carry forward his family name. Unconscious of his surroundings, he bowed before the image in earnest petition. If God, in his mercy, should answer, all would be well; but if God, in his mercy, answered not, still all would be well; for it was the philosophy of this astute man to accept with unperturbed mind whatever was inevitable. Filled with the belief that his ancestors desired an unbroken family line, he left nothing undone which he thought might inure to that end; but it was his policy, after all the burning of incense and clinching of hands, to leave events with heaven.

Being blessed with worldly goods, Ching Fo, for such was the honorable name of the worshiper, had spared nothing that he thought might appease the anger of the Gods, which so far had operated to deprive him of sons. For two long periods of time before this, he had laid his choicest incense before Hirati, yet when

the child came it was only a girl and even now he was seriously pondering over some other way of providing a successor to the family line. He was willing, however, to give the Goddess another trial; but if she failed him again, he had made up his mind to resort to some of the methods, allowed by the Code of China, for the continuation of the family worship. The trading of a girl for a boy, the taking of a number two wife, or the adoption of another man's son, were all legal remedies which flitted through his mind; but he "kept the face" and one unacquainted with the circumstances would not have known the anxiety that was in his heart. So wrapped was he in his thoughts that he lingered long before the idol, oblivious of the fact that others were waiting to offer their devotions. But suddenly, at the sound of approaching footsteps, he laid a wafer upon the burner and passed, with sol-

emn diginity, into a shaded path. He had gone but a few steps, however, when he heard a familiar voice calling him:

"Whither away, most honored brother? the day and the hour are propitious. Shall we not sip some tea? I would have converse with thee; there are many things that I would say."

Ching Fo turned and, seeing his friend, bowed very low and said,

"Some spirit hath brought us together, Sing Lee; I saw thee in my sleep last night. Hath the Gods been good to thee and are thy honorable parents well?"

"Well; and able to climb the path and pay their devotions to their patron saint," replied Sing Lee.

"Thou art in good hap to have them to this ripe old age. Thou art a favorite of the Gods, Sing Lee, for thou hast both parents and sons. Parents to lean upon thee in their old age and

sons to continue the family worship when thou art gone."

"Yes, yes, the old man in the sky has been good to me and he will be good to thee. The astrologers predict a bountiful harvest this year and the birth of many male children. Thy day will come. The sky is full of promise. Let us have tea and sweets and forget the anxieties of the hour. Here is a good young priest who will serve us."

So saying, the two men stepped inside the temple and sat down before a lacquered table. The young priest responded to Sing Lee's two raised fingers with two cups of tea and two plates of preserved ginger. In front of Ching Fo, however, he also placed that great symbol of fecundity and strength, a piece of dried carp ceremoniously wrapped in many folds of red paper. This delicate reminder that the young priest held in remembrance his desire

for a son made Ching Fo slip the tiny thing into his sleeve with the reverent air of a man who touches sacred things. No word was spoken, but the electric spark of love passed from eye to eye and carried with it such comfort as comes to those who have mutual understanding.

Then Ching Fo turned to Sing Lee and they entered into the conversation of men who live and move in the same social grade—a little politics, a little religion, a little gossip, made up their hour; but there was another subject that was near the heart of each which they mentioned not. This was the betrothal of one of Sing Lee's sons to one of Ching Fo's daughters. It had long been a foregone conclusion that the families should intermarry; but there was diplomacy to be used, especially as thus far, Ching Fo's wife had produced only daughters.

"What if this plague of girls should con-

tinue and what if his name should come to an untimely end?" was Sing Lee's thought. Much as he loved his friend, he dared not think what it would mean to his family if there should come into it an element which would endanger its succession. The men loved each other like very brothers; but Sing Lee felt a reluctance about discussing so serious a matter as the betrothal until he saw a little further into the prospects of Ching Fo. So they sipped their tea and ate their preserved ginger and when they arose to go each bade the other a more or less restricted good bye.

But Sing Lee had taken only a few steps when he turned and, with much warmth, said,

"May the Gods bring it to pass as thou desirest, my excellent brother."

"I thank thee," replied Ching Fo, "for this expression of sympathy and I do pray that the day is near at hand when I shall be blessed

with a son; for nothing is so unfilial as to die and leave no posterity. My pretty wife is the most unhappy of women because, so far, she has borne me only daughters. But now the sign of the zodiac is in Taurus and I hope before another moon my luck will change. Goodbye, honored brother, and may the Gods bless thee and thine."

So saying, Ching Fo turned into the path that led directly down the hill to a bungalow of more than usual pretentiousness. An arch of honor stood before the gate while over the high stone wall rose a heavily tiled roof, on each corner of which were the lions of Buddha. A wooden gate, fastened with iron bars, after the fashion of ages past, prevented outsiders from intruding into a sacred home life which was Ching Fo's all in all. Gray with the grayness of ancient things and weatherbeaten by the storms of a thousand years was this house, nestling so hidden in a mountain nook.

Before the gate the stone pavement was worn into hollows by the footsteps of generations long since dead, while in the front room of the house burned unceasing incense on the ancestral shrine. Opposite the gate, carved in the solid rock were sculptured divinities presiding over a basin which was used for the ceremonious washing of hands. And here had uncounted numbers of Ching Fo's ancestors performed the sacred ceremony. At the back of the house was a tangle of trailing columbine and hibiscus bushes where nested birds and bees and spiders; for no attempt at landscape gardening had ever desecrated the grounds.

Such was the home of Ching Fo and such he hoped to continue it for uncounted ages to come. Everything about the place indicated that the owner was a man upon whom the Gods had bestowed a goodly share of the things that

perish. Acres and acres of waving rice fields were his and terraces of flowers blossomed far up the steep hill side.

What the western man calls modern conveniences, however, were nowhere to be seen. But modern conveniences were not necessary to the happiness of Ching Fo. He was content to have things just as his ancestors had left them. If the doors creaked on their wooden hinges, or if the flies and mosquitoes crept through the space between the eaves and the wall, that was no more than they had done in the past; and if his father and grandfather had borne with these discomforts, why should not he? Neither did he worry because the Chinese rat—more famous and more troublesome than any other rat—lived and squeaked between the roof and the ceiling. Even the snakes that occasionally thrust forked tongues through holes in the wall were looked upon

by Ching Fo as part and parcel of the place. Other things beside the rats and the snakes had a pre-emption claim upon the cracks and crevices—creeping things of uncanny look, for the house was very old.

Ching Fo said that he had lived in it a thousand years, by which he meant that the family shrine, so stiff and fly-specked, had been mantained there for a thousand years and he reckoned himself, not as an individual, but as the representative of a family which must be considered in its entirety, rather than in separate parts. To honor this long line of ancestors and to see to it that a successor was duly provided was Ching Fo's mission in life and subjects remote from this great one did not enter very fully into his calculations. He believed in ghosts, for there were many shadowy resurrections at his own hearthstone,—resurrections of fathers and mothers who were ever counseling

him to honor their memory and observe their customs.

For ages before him his forefathers had practiced the rigid virtue that makes possible a clear vision of spiritual things; hence no secret passion had scattered its uncleanness through his body or filled his brain with the disease of sensuality. Economy and industry had brought to him the comforts which go to make life pleasant in a Chinese home and it was reckoned in the neighborhood that he was a fortunate man. The one dark cloud that hung across his path and left its shadow over all his days was, that despite the costly incense burned to the Goddess Hirati, and despite the soft, sweet prayers of his wife, so far she had borne him only daughters. Beautiful they were, with their almond shaped eyes and their obedient manners, but not in any possible way could they be considered as representatives of the family line.

As he entered the front door where the little lamp was burning in honor of his ancestors, he felt it beating in upon his heart that he was under the displeasure of some evil spirit. He lighted an incense stick, carefully leaving the ashes of preceding ones piled high in the bowl, removed the shoes from his white stockinged feet and took from the shelf a copy of the Chinese Family Code. Running his eye over the pages from back to front, he put his finger on a place where it read:

"Slave girls, if they bear sons to the master, may be the instruments with which to bridge over a weak spot in the family line. Nephews may be adopted, or daughters betrothed to the sons of friends and the sons-in-law be adopted."

"But all these plans have their objections," he said to himself, "they are courts of last resort, to which we go only when all else fails. The most feasible way seems to be to take

another wife. Peace may be kept in the family, or it may not—even if not, 'twere better than to die and leave no posterity."

As he soliloquized over the case, he thought of Ah Sin, the astrologer, and decided to pay him a visit. Some definite information might be gotten there, and no stone should be left unturned in such a serious case. In a silent and preoccupied manner he passed out through the gate and into the open road, thence across a strip of stony ground and through a gap in the cliff, from which he emerged upon a vast level of rice fields where the green waves followed each other all day like the tides of an inland sea. The sight was so beautiful that it intoxicated him and in a sort of enchantment he heard, in imagination, the cry of a newborn babe. Startled and thrilled by the sound, he hastened forward to the astrologer.

"What mystic music is it that plays upon

me today," he said, "I come to consult thee concerning an heir to the shrine of my fathers, and lo, I hear a voice like the wail of an infant, wafted across the fields. Tell me, O good prophet, are the Gods angry, or are they propitious? Canst thou answer, wise man? Two daughters have I but, alas, no son. The time, however, is ripe for another child. Canst tell me what the signs are?"

The astrologer turned over his charts and made calculations among the stars before he spoke and then very measuredly said:

"Some of the signs are right and some are wrong. The crab is not in conjunction with the sun, but the vernal equinox is at hand and Aries is a masculine sign."

This was somewhat less than Ching Fo had hoped, but he hastened homeward with the feeling still strong in his heart that good news awaited him. As he retraced his steps over the

mountain path, the mystic sound still thrilled him and filled him with the hope that he had heard a voice—and that it was the voice of a son.

But all his expectations were dashed to pieces as a servant met him at the door and, bowing very low, informed him that a new born female child awaited his acknowledgment. Dark shadows flung themselves into his coal black eyes and, for a moment, he was staggered by the blow.

"Can it be," he said bitterly, "that some angry God is turning all my sons to girls? Oh, gentle Goddess, to whom I have so often burned my choicest incense, where art thou? and why hast thou forsaken me?"

A wail from the infant brought him to the consciousness that he must decide whether he should accept this latest born daughter, or whether he should command the servants to

expose her. Being a good Buddhist, he had always observed the rule of the brotherhood forbidding the destruction of life, except under circumstances most imperative. For this, and for other reasons, he could not find it in his heart to exercise his right, under the law, and sacrifice the infant. So he decided that out of his abundance she must be provided for, even though the duty were an unwelcome one. He reasoned logically that the power given to the father by the Romans, by the Gauls and by his own countrymen, over the lives of his family, came in direct conflict with the law of Buddha, and Ching Fo felt bound by the latter.

"There is no help for it," he said aloud, "I must accept this third female child."

Thus deciding, he put his feet into a pair of embroidered shoes, tossed back the long queue, which had been coiled around his head, and went to the bedside of his wife. As he beheld

the infant, the cold legal aspect of the case passed out of his mind and a look of inexpressible tenderness crept over his face. For a moment he bent his eye upon her, then taking her almost reverently, in his arms, he raised her three times towards the ceiling, thus admitting that she was bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. When he had pressed her to his bosom for one brief moment, he handed her to the nurse and retired. No word was spoken by either husband or wife, but a tear bedewed the mother's eyes as she turned her face to the wall.

The formal acknowledgement of the child having taken place, it was dressed and laid beside its mother, who feebly raised her arms to receive the little stranger, although uttering a moan at the thought of having again given birth to a female child. Sadly she remembered the incense she had burned and the prayers she

had said to her God; sadly she sighed for a son to make her seem more beautiful in the eyes of her husband.

Thus began the life of one who was destined by the God of Fate to be a comforter and a strong support in time of need and to endure much for her high ideal of duty.

CHAPTER II.

"There are five things which are unfilial, but the greatest of them is to have no posterity. To die without posterity (viz. male children) is an offense against the whole line of ancestors and terminates the family worship." —*Confucian Family Code.*

The unconscious cause of all this trouble stretched her toes and blinked her eyes and grew, just like any other well-cared for baby. On the twenty-seventh day they put salt in her eyes to make them tough; put a charm around her neck and dressed her in a red blouse, embroidered with butterflies. They also shaved her head, leaving only a little tuft of hair on the right side, to show that she was not betrothed. They called her Ah Moy, which being interpreted, means a female child. But they prefixed the number three that she might

be distinguished from her two sisters whose names were also Ah Moy. Sometimes her mother called her the "blessed one" for she was very good, but to this, Ching Fo objected because he thought it an innovation upon the usages of their ancestors, who never gave names to their female children.

"It is not proper," he said, "that we should break away from the customs of our forefathers."

But he loved the child and carried her, many a day, upon his arm. Together they saw the trees and the great gray boulders that projected from the mountain side, and together they saw the bloom on many a wayside flower. Although she was only a girl, family relations came from far and near and brought her gifts of sweets and toys, and sometimes of durions, which had such a strong odor that it made her sneeze, then her mother, fearing she was taking cold, put a wadded blouse around her.

One day a priest came, pony back, adown the hill, and brought her a blessing inclosed in many a fold of yellow paper on which was writing, too sacred to be thrown away since it had enwrapped the great Chinese monad, the Yin and Yang, sacred in all the east as a charm and good luck symbol. This, the little mother thought of much value, for it was so seldom that a priest took the trouble to bless a girl baby.

"We will hang it over the bed to keep the evil spirits away," she said.

"Yes, daughter," replied the priest, "it is well to hang it over the bed."

So Ching Fo with hammer and nail fastened the charm high up on the wall, over the cradle where slept the third daughter in blissful unconsciousness.

Poor little Ah Moy! It was travesty to give her the Yang and Yin, because far back

in the darkness of forgotten time, the symbol had stood for the equality of the sexes. But the priests had forgotten and during the thousand years that Ching Fo had lived in the bungalow, no inquiry had been made as to its meaning. (The adoption by the Northern Pacific railroad company of the Yin and Yang as a trade mark has made us familiar with this great symbol of the Far East. It is found on gravestones dating thousands of years before Christ and is in every climate from Yezo, in the north of Japan, to the soft semi-tropics of India. It is also found in the basketry of our North American Indians and cut on the stone discs of the Mound Builders in Tennessee. It has many meanings, as the male and female principles, light and darkness, or positive and negative forces. When made of black and white, the white represents the male principle and the black the female.)

For the first three months Ah Moy lay very quietly in her little bamboo cradle, thinking wonderful things about her fingers which were taper and her toes which were fat. Occasionally, when her heavy clothing was removed, her feet flew up to her mouth,—but she kept the calm exterior of a Chinese baby until one day a cockroach came tramping across her bed. This made her laugh and so pleased her mother that she left her weaving and whispered into the little brown ear of her child a soft prayer—a prayer to the same Goddess Hirati, beseeching her to intercede for Ah Moy that she might some day become the mother of sons, for she was now betrothed to Ting Ho, the sturdy three-year-old son of Sing Lee. Soon after this she was old enough to have her pretty little fingers whipped; for a Chinese baby must not lay the slightest hand upon anything that is not given it. Even the long pipe that

her father smoked so temptingly near as he carried her in his arms, was forbidden to be investigated by the least touch. Neither must she be rocked in her cradle for fear she might become selfish and tyrannical.

A few weeks more and she was taken into the open court and laid on a heavy bed quilt, where she could see her sisters play and hear them chant the pretty hymns that the priests had given them to learn. Out of doors, with the sky above her and the glory of color around her, Ah Moy saw an everchanging wonderland. From the emerald depths of the bamboo that had thrown one slender arm across the wall, she heard the tinkle of many bells,—the soft, far-away tinkle of the bell insect, so dear to the heart of painters and poets. (Old Chinese poems refer to the bell insect with great affection, because it makes a noise that reminds them of home.) Her father was very fond of

the small musicians which swarmed in the summer, and Ah Moy's ear was attuned to insect music by ages of nature-loving ancestors. She heard the frogs in her father's rice field "reverently repeat their poem" and she was lulled to sleep by the droning of the bees and the sighing of the pines.

Ching Fo was fond of his three daughters and joined in their play with youthful simplicity. He caught for them fire-flies and grasshoppers, imprisoning them in the tiniest of bamboo cages; he hung boughs of green upon the wall to attract the butterflies and Ah Moy soon grew to anticipate with pleasure her winged visitors. It was a great event in the lives of the three girls when, one day, their mother placed in the court a box containing five soft, fluffy, little chickens. One wing of each little chick was dyed purple, so that they might be distinguished from Ah Fat's chickens,

which had a red spot on each head. Every day the chickens were turned out into the street for exercise, but always those with the purple wings found their way back to the court, while Ah Fat's chickens, with the red heads, as surely went into his gate. The little girls played with their new pets, divided their rice with them and, sometimes, longed to follow them into the street; but the inexorable custom of China, which gives girls no privileges, outside their own gates, was rigidly enforced. For them the noisy world beyond was a sealed book which it were sacrilege to open. Only once, when the gate had been left ajar did Ah Moy, number one, venture into the path and then she received such a cruel blow on her legs that she never repeated the disobedience. That night her nurse told her the frightful story about the "cave of the infant ghosts," and how a great dragon watches for disobedient little girls and

sometimes catches them and carries them off to his cave, where they must build sand towers which are ever swept away by the wind and which the tired little hands must hasten to rebuild, lest the dragon come and punish them for idleness. This story so impressed Ah Moy, number one, that she dreamed, when she went to sleep that the dragon came and fastened his claws deep in her leg where the bamboo whip had left its mark.

So passed the days of childhood and so grew the three daughters of Ching Fo in blissful unconsciousness that they were regarded by their parents as evidence of an angry God. For them, as for other children, there were days of joy and days of sorrow; but for them, more than for other children, the birds sang, the bees droned and Nature poured out her bounteous store of bloom. The heart of Ching Fo was warm and loving; the little mother was a

model of devotion; and weeks slipped into enchanted years.

But one summer day a new era came which re-shaped all the doing of the bungalow. On that eventful day there was added to the family another babe—a babe appointed by the Gods to continue the family worship, a long looked for, a patiently waited for, a much beloved son.

Ching Fo felt now the blessed assurance that for him the little lamp on the household shrine would continue to burn as it had done for his fathers. He felt that for him, as for them, the filial love of his son would ensure a tablet to his memory, and that the smoke of incense would curl in misty circles over his unforgotten name. He saw, in softest fancy, the children of his children's children keeping the home life forever free from the encroachment of new ideas. With his three daughters he continued

to hold happy and loving intercourse; but as they were only females, born to raise children to some other family, he regarded them in the light of luxuries rather than as successors to his ancestral line. They were beautiful and obedient and now that he had a son, he felt it good to have them, for they vied with him in celebrating the advent of their little brother; and altogether the house of Ching Fo was the happiest in the land.

The news that a son had been born to him spread to all the country round about, for he immediately had set before his house the tallest bamboo pole that could be found and from its top he floated that great symbol of fecundity and strength, a paper carp. Large of belly, red of gill and gaping of mouth, it dove and floated and told the happy story. Many a time had Ching Fo seen his neighbors raise the carp to tell of the birth of a son, and three times had

he prepared the pole for himself, only to sorrowfully lay it away because the God of Fate had sent him only a daughter. On such occasions, the wise ones predicted that he was under the displeasure of the Gods and that his family line would perish from the earth; but now the noble symbol was flaunting a proud defiance to all their sneers and he was full of joy.

The newcomer was strong and healthy and like most Chinese babies, a non-cryer. The poor little-foot mother was hardly able to move before relatives came from far and near to pay their respects and to bring presents, which proved a most excellent investment, from a business point of view, for Ching Fo acknowledged the honor paid his son by returning many fold.

The two older daughters looked on with wonder at the importance attributed to the advent of this man child. They loved him and

felt for him a great reverence; but Ah Moy, number three, cuddled up to her mother and gave vent to tears. Ching Fo, seeing how deeply the child grieved for a place on her mother's knee, tried to console her by presenting her with a little sleeve dog.

"Take this, daughter of mine, and weep no more, for in the next incarnation mayhap thou shalt be born a male. The yoke that galls thee is of thine own making, pretty one, and when thou hast atoned for sins committed in some past incarnation, it will come true that thou shalt be no more a despised female. Take the dog and mayest thou achieve."

Ah Moy took the dog and held it in her little brown arms but the hurt was too deep to be so easily cured. She clung to her nurse and cried and behaved like a very jealous little girl. But the great children's festival, called the "feast of dolls", was near at hand and when

her father took her on his arm to see the shops, set out in dazzling array with toys and lanterns, and when sweets mysteriously found their way into her sleeve pocket, she dried her tears and joined her sisters in the festivities. For six enchanted days the celebration continued with its round of merry-making. The go-down was ransacked for dolls of mothers and grandmothers and the tiniest toddlers in the neighborhood exchanged calls and brought gifts. The Ching Fo family donned their richest silks and kept open house while games and other amusements were the order of the day. As a new doll was purchased for every daughter in the family and as all the dolls had to be dressed in silk and have many a piece of miniature furniture, it was a busy time and little Ah Moy forgot her trouble. When the festival was over and all the dolls were stored away to be seen no more for a year, she contentedly settled into her place.

The fifth day of the fifth moon brought another festival of great importance, namely, "the Boy's Festival", and Ching Fo decided that it should be celebrated with all the display that so important an occasion deserved. According to custom, there should be at this season, a pole before the house flying a fish for each son in the family. But Ching Fo waived the strict letter of the law and raised a whole school of carp—some for nephews, some for prospective sons and some for sons-in-law, while in-doors were miniature warriors and all the paraphernalia of a soldier's train.

On the streets were processions of old and young climbing the long hill to the monastery. Never before in all her three thousand years had Hirati had so many young mothers before her; never before had the temple been so thronged with boys. Up the long mountain path Ching Fo determined that his son and

heir should be taken and to that end had a retinue of servants detailed. In a sedan chair, bespangled with gold embroidery and closed in with heavy silk curtains, the mother and infant were placed. Two servants preceded them to beat off the crowd, while strung out in single file, were the daughters and their nurses, an old woman to act as adviser in case of accident, and friends and relatives innumerable. Four men carried the sedan chair, while each rikisha was attended by one pull man and one push man, making in all a dozen or more servants in attendance upon this one blinking baby.

If a young mother was ever proud it was the little wife of Ching Fo, as she stood with her son before Hirati that day. Old friends congratulated her; the poor looked with envy upon her fine cortege; and even Hirati seemed to smile down upon her. In the afternoon a priest, with shaven head and yellow robe, had himself

let down from the highest point of jutting rock in order that he might indulge in grandiose prophecy concerning the future of the babe. And later, he performed juggleries and sword dances and swallowed fire and spat out ribbons, and by a magic sentence changed water into wine. So passed a delightful day, and as the mists of evening crept over the distant hills, Mrs. Ching Fo and her party, tired out with pleasure, turned homeward.

During all the time the son had uttered no protest, but had slept and eaten and, like a true philosopher, closed his eyes when the smoke of incense blew too strong upon him.

After the festival was over and the toys were all laid away, rice and chop sticks took the place of sweets and everything fell back into the old, uneventful groove. The little girls chanted their lessons from morning till night; the frogs and the insects kept up their music; and the

rats scrambled through the windows and down the chimney in search of food. Sing Lee rode over in his rikisha once a week to gossip and, taking it all in all, life was sweet and heaven propitious.

CHAPTER III.

The landscape that the poet loves,
  Is that of early May,
When budding green is half concealed,
  Beneath the willow spray.
The beautiful embroidery,
  Which days of summer yield,
Appeals to every bumpkin,
  Who takes his walk afield.

—Ying Chu Yang, 800 B. C.

So slipped the days of childhood, with their sunshine and their shade, until Ah Moy was five years old. Her nimble step was always pattering beside her father, for she followed him with the sweet constancy of an affectionate nature. Although it was high time that her feet were bound, nothing had been done about it, except that Ching Fo had, several times, conversed with his wife on the subject

and had had the child's bed removed to an outhouse that her moans might not disturb the family.

Ah Moy prattled about it in pretty baby talk and thought that when a two and half inch shoe could be gotten onto her foot, she would look very beautiful.

"Father, tell me the story about lilies growing in places where pretty little feet have trod," said Ah Moy one bright morning, as she slipped her hand into his.

"Yes, daughter. It is said that the last empress of the Shan dynasty wore such lovely little shoes that yellow lilies sprang out of the ground wherever she trod."

"Father, do fairies have little feet?"

"Yes, daughter, fairies, so beloved by children, have little feet."

"And will my betrothed love me better, if I have my feet bound?"

"Yes," said the father, "no refined Chinaman wishes to marry a woman with large feet."

These same questions and many more, Ah Moy put to her mother, who replied with sadness in her voice,

"Yes, yes; it is the custom and women have little voice in the matter."

She had suffered too much with her own crippled feet to be willing to inflict the torture upon her daughter; but she kept the secret hidden in a heart that had never been encouraged to hold opinions which came in conflict with those of the male members of the family. So she showed Ah Moy pictures of little foot women and said that they looked very beautiful.

"Besides," she said, "the men wish it, and it must be done. Women must obey the men of the family whether they desire to or not."

"Oh mamma, your little girl will not be disobedient. I will be brave and keep my little dog close in my arms."

"Yes," said her mother, "perhaps the little dog will comfort you through the trying ordeal."

As she said this there came into her face an expression of pain, but she brushed it away with a nervous motion of the hand and said,

"Wait till father says so. It will be time enough when he speaks."

That evening in answer to an inquiry from his wife, Ching Fo replied,

"Let her run a little longer. It is nearly time for the plum blossom festival and I love to see her dancing down the path as I go to watch the bloom breaking through the bark. Let her run until the festival is over."

To Ching Fo the blossoming of the plum trees was a season of great joy, for then he could bow his head before those ennobling influences that come with the early spring and realize their uplifting power. He felt the

balm in the air and the soft clearness of the lengthened days and a tenderness crept over him which made the prattle of his children unusually sweet. So he said again to his wife,

"Let her run. Child life is short enough at best. When the festival is over, it will be time enough." His wife made a pretty, resigned bow, but he noticed in her eye a look not altogether in accord with her usual submissiveness.

"She is strong and brave," he added, "and she will bear it well."

"Yes, yes; she is strong—and if it must be done—it must be done," and casting a pathetic glance at her own feet, she hobbled out of the room.

Ching Fo's eye followed her with a look of surprise. He had never suspected that she was dissatisfied with her lot, or that she had opinions of her own.

"I must send for her and learn the meaning

of the unwillingness in her face."

So he clapped his hands and a servant entered.

"Han Kow," said he, "inform the madame that I would have converse with her."

"The madame?" he replied, "I know not where to look for her. I have seen her but once today and then in conversation with a woman at the back gate."

"Find her," the master commanded angrily.

Han Kow fled out of the room and through the open court to the servant's quarters where he found Mrs. Ching Fo entertaining her son with a butterfly. When told that the master wished her to report immediately to him, she hurried, like a good wife, into his presence.

"Let us speak of the foot-binding," he said, "Is everything in readiness?"

"There are bandages in plenty and the bed, as thou knowest, is removed beyond hearing," she said timidly.

"I like not thine answers today," frowned Ching Fo, "hast thou told me all? Have you not had conversation with some one outside the family?"

"I have seen no one," she replied, "except a worthy woman who asked for refreshments to bear her up under a long journey."

Even this did not satisfy Ching Fo, but he thought it best not to continue the subject; so he turned the conversation to the coming festival.

"We must prepare for many guests," he said, "for there will come to stay with us, two nephews from beyond the great canal and a son of my uncle, beside callers and friends at all hours. You must see to it that everything is in readiness."

"Everything will be in readiness," responded his wife and again left the room

Thus ended the first trivial misunderstand-

ing between Ching Fo and his wife. Previous to this she had abstained from expressing her own ideas and had been in constant attendance upon her husband's slightest wish. It was but a shadow, however, and soon blew over, for the little woman was too busy with preparations for entertaining her husband's guests to think on any other subject.

Crisp hog skin and mushroom sauce filled her mind; preserved eggs that had been laid away in ashes of straw by her own dainty fingers must be resurrected; and sweets beyond the brightest dreams of the little girls must be patted into shape. Beside refreshments, the lintels of the doors and blank spaces on the wall must be covered with red paper and over the bungalow must float a new silk flag.

Because the little wife of Ching Fo had so much to do that she did not know where to begin, she concluded not to do anything that day,

but to send a rikisha coolie over to the home of Sing Lee and invite the worthy matron of that house to come and confer with her concerning some of the details of the work. It was a happy thought and turned a gloomy morning into a sunny afternoon.

The wife of Sing Lee was much pleased at the honor paid her and was glad to have an excuse for going out, so she made hasty preparations to obey the summons. She belonged to the best society and would not, if she could, and could not, if she would, move without a maid, so she brought with her Lo Ming, a normal footed servant. Being heavily built and the mother of many children, the wife of Sing Lee waddled like a goose on her three inch shoes; but Lo Ming stood firm on wooden clogs. Lo Ming also wore ornaments in her hair that jingled and smooth, green bracelets on her wrists which were placed there when she was

a child, so that as she grew there was no possibility of ever getting them off. Beside her maid, the lady brought along an infant and its nurse, a man to run ahead and a push man, so that the string of servants in attendance on this one informal call was eight. The nurse and the maid and the baby went into the house with the Madame, but the coolies curled up on the sidewalk and went to sleep.

Leaning heavily upon the shoulder of Lo Ming, the visitor entered the presence of her hostess with many a smile and bow and much rustling of silken trousers. As soon as the ceremony of entrance was over, the good lady brought a few choice recipe out of her sleeve and proceeded to explain their special merits. She also presented the wife of Ching Fo with a bottle of Chautney which she said was of her own make and of excellent quality. Then followed a short conversation about the coming

festival in which Madame Sing Lee offered to loan her ivory chop sticks and supply any lack of dainties from her own store. But the temptation to gossip was too strong to be resisted by these women who so seldom escaped from the routine of home duties. It began with the missionaries and also ended with the missionaries,—their tight dresses, their large feet, their food, their habits, their lack of respect for the aged, etc., etc.

"I had myself carried past their school in a sedan chair," said Madame Sing Lee, and I saw with my own eyes how they go tramping about like men and how their dresses are drawn in at the waist, so as to show the figure,—it would make a Chinese woman blush. I wonder how they can expect to live in a country like ours, where women are taught to be modest and keep out of sight!"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Ching Fo, "and they

build their houses without least regard to the Wind God. Some of the roofs point straight to the north and others angle on a line with the temples. There is no doubt but this has much bad influence on the weather."

Thus passed the afternoon; many little nothings were discussed, much tea was sipped and the water clock pointed to five before Mrs. Sing Lee, with her train of attendants, took the road for home.

The next day, however, things began to move in the house of Ching Fo. The servants were called together and the work laid out in true business-like style, the Dragon flag was finished, packages of fire-crackers and incense sticks were brought out of their boxes and a glare of red paper transformed the doors and lintels. A week of this strenuous work and the house of Ching Fo broke into loud jubilee. Double headers were exploded and tom-toms

beaten; stringed instruments and wind instruments throbbed weird music on the evening air; processions of children chanted Buddhistic hymns and long rows of lanterns cast a magic glow over the scene. Ching Fo placed the spirit-recalling incense in a burner and, with eyes slightly inclined toward his nose, meditated upon the sacred faces of his dead. As the perfume filled the room, he folded his hands and fixed his eyes upon the vase until he saw a spirit hover in the smoke, take shape, grow brighter, become illumined, and then softly fade away. How long he meditated and how intense the strain, was only revealed by the drops of perspiration that beaded his shaven forehead. After a season of silence, he arose, went to the table and religiously set apart space for his invisible guests. Then there gathered around the board such male members of his family as had paid their debts, dissipated their

"wrath matter' and were able to wish each other good luck for a thousand years. Abstemiousness and ceremonious politeness characterized this feast of the dead; but after it was over for ten enchanted days poetry and "squeeze pidgin" (a sort of commission, generally in the form of a present, which is exacted by Chinamen who assist in arranging the details of a trade,) gambling and drinking followed.

The whole of China was newly shaven and newly clad; spotless white stockings peeped beneath trousers of heavenly blue; queues were lengthened and swung artistically about the heels, while in every house, even those of the poorest of the poor, a little incense smouldered in a vase or curled over the graves of pet cats and birds.

To each of his friends Ching Fo sent a little present, wrapped in many folds of ceremonious

paper; while to his children he brought gifts of fruit and toys and lavished upon them an exuberance of love. "Perfume of the lotus", "dew of the morning" and "heaven-born", were not too loving names for him to bestow upon his daughters during the plum blossom season.

The trees about which centered a large part of the festivities were gnarled and old; green moss hung heavy on the north side, and many a bird nested in the boughs. But they were transformed before the festival was over by fluttering scraps of paper on which were written poems. In this happy contest of verse making, all were welcome—from the poorest coolie to the finest scholar. Whether visionary young women dashed off a line and twisted it, with deft fingers, around a twig, or whether sedate old men pondered long over a sonnet, was a matter of little moment to Ching Fo; for he felt that the great watchful heavens pro-

claimed the equality of man. Confucius had taught long centuries before, that all the black haired men were brethren and Ching Fo, as his heart expanded with the budding spring, felt the oneness of his kind. Beside his realization of fellowship, there had been poured into his soul myth after myth concerning the festival, each of which had sunk in and been absorbed until every detail of the occasion symbolized something either beautiful, terrible, or mysterious. To gather his family under a tree and with a long pole to strike its limbs and bring down upon them a shower of scented petals, was, to his mind, a baptism which carried with it the sacredness of a religious rite. To buy birds in cages for his children to liberate was to him an invocation to the Goddess of Mercy. In these and many other like fancies he believed and taught his children to believe.

CHAPTER IV.

"The willow sprays are yellow fringed,
The grass is gaily green,
Peach bloom in wild confusion,
With the perfumed plum is seen,
The eastward breeze sweeps onward,
Yet our sorrows never go;
And the lengthening days of spring time,
Bring lengthening days of woe."

—*Chi-Chihi, B. C. 718.*

The festival was over and life in the bungalow of Ching Fo was settling back into its usual monotony when, one evening, a new idea was intruded upon the master of the house—and new ideas were always unwelcome guests to Ching Fo. With his third daughter tripping lightly before him, he had strolled down the path to see if, perchance, the plum trees were putting out any new bloom, when a bit of paper,

upon which was written a short poem, came fluttering over the wall.

"Some belated guest," thought Ching Fo, as he unfolded a neatly written page and began to read, but, to his astonishment, he found that although written in the refined language of the Wenli (a language spoken only by the educated class), it contained a criticism on the custom of foot binding. By what authority it had been written and by whose audacious hand intruded upon his premises were questions that knit his brow and darkened his eye. Naturally his first thought was of the missionaries who had so persistently maintained their school below him, on the Yang-ste-kiang river. But as he looked the document over, he saw that it bore none of the marks of their hand.

"They never write in verse," he said to himself, "and they would not, they could not, use the beautiful ideographs of the Wenli."

Ah Moy saw the cloud that spread over her father's face and slipped her little brown hand into his, but he noticed her not. The sentiment expressed in that trifling verse had stung him as an insult. It was his first thought to burn the sheet and thus end the matter; but after a few moments of hesitation, he folded it deep into his sleeve, all the while dubiously shaking his head.

"If the wife should get a glimpse of it," he said half aloud, "it would add fuel to the fire already kindled," then turning to his little daughter he took her hand and together they walked back toward the house.

Everything was as they had left it; the lamp flickered on the household shrine; the setting sun worked its miracles of purple and gold on the mountain peaks and blue sheets of mists were gloaming the valley; but he saw none of these things, remembering only the poem which

had been aimed by sacrilegious hands at his family life. The more he thought of it, the more he felt that it was a matter of too much moment to be passed lightly by. It came beating into his heart that he must consult someone and that this someone must not be his wife. In this state of mind he put on a heavily wadded blouse and went into the street. At once a swarm of coolies gathered about him to solicit his patronage but without heeding them he turned into a narrow path that led up to the temple.

He had only gone a few steps, however, when he turned back and addressed the nearest coolie, saying,

"Take me down to the house of Sing Lee."

Ching Fo loved Sing Lee like a very brother and while his first thought had been to go to the priest, he reconsidered it and decided to confer with his old friend. There was little re-

semblance in thought between these men but there was enduring confidence and respect. Sing Lee's care-free life contrasted sharply with the sedate nature of Ching Fo, but their differences fled away when either needed assistance. Many a time had the retort courteous been exchanged but always with kindness and good humor. To Ching Fo's ideas of propriety, Sing Lee would sometimes say,

"What is propriety? and what is shame? Only the talk of fools. I tell thee, my friend, that wisdom consists in keeping the mind free from such thoughts."

And when Ching Fo reproved him for his lavish expenditure of money, Sing Lee would say, "there is no disease worse than avarice."

So in going to him with his trouble, Ching Fo felt that he must approach his friend cautiously lest, owing to the differences between them, he might find that Sing Lee himself had some knowledge of the objectionable poem.

As he stepped out of the rikisha Ching Fo felt in his sleeve to make sure that the offensive paper was still there and then struck the old bronze bell at the gate a vigorous blow. A servant unbarred the door and Ching Fo passed up a pair of wooden stairs to the roof, where he found Sing Lee facing the south and softly thrumming a small stringed instrument. The music was suited to the hour and Ching Fo paused to listen. After a short prelude, a voice rose clear and sweet in an old familiar song.

"The sun is setting and I loose my boat,
And lightly o'er the misty waters float."

The verse was not finished, however, for Sing Lee felt the approach of his friend and, laying the instrument down, arose and bowed very low, saying:

"The unexpected happens when Ching Fo leaves his own delightful home to accept the hospitality of Sing Lee. All is well at the bungalow, I hope?"

"Yes," replied Ching Fo, "all is well."

"Art thou fully rested after the joys of the plum blossom festival?" inquired Sing Lee.

"Fully," returned Ching Fo, "and ready to resume the duties of the hour. Are the Gods good to thee?"

"Yes, the Gods are good," replied Sing Lee.

"Music hath charms," remarked Ching Fo, "let us hear a song."

At which Sing Lee, with a merry twinkle in his eye, sang,

"You ask me why I greet the priest, but not
his God?
The God sits mute, the man, at least, returns
my nod."

"A characteristic prank," said Ching Fo, "wilt thou never leave off nonsense? I came to consult you upon a serious matter."

"Very well then, we shall be serious. Is there anything of mutual interest?"

"Yes," said Ching Fo, "something of interest to all good men. Hast thou not heard how the foreign devils are pushing into the country and how they intrude their ideas upon us?"

"Yes, there is an ever increasing crop of them, I admit, but we must make the best of it," said Sing Lee.

"The foreigners claim that they wish to facilitate the handling of goods upon the river," said Ching Fo, without noticing the discouraging attitude of his friend, "and I hear they are already wrangling about the likin charges." At this, he scrutinized the face of Sing Lee to see whether it betrayed any knowledge of the matter he had in his mind. But Sing Lee had heard nothing of the likin troubles and Ching Fo ventured a little nearer.

"Another poem has been added to those already gathered at the festival," said he in a careless manner at the same time watching the effect of his sally.

"Allow me the pleasure of reading it," requested Sing Lee, "perchance the last is the best,—it sometimes happens so."

Thus re-assured Ching Fo pulled the obnoxious poem from his sleeve and handed it to his friend who read it with mingled amusement and surprise.

"What mountebank has written this?" he exclaimed as he finished it. "It reads like a lay from the 'Beggar's Pagoda'. Surely the writer cannot boast of his wit even though he has written in the Wenli."

"No," replied Ching Fo, "but after all there is danger in it. Such things do harm if not looked after. It is against the law of China to put on paper that which will cause disrepect of ancestral customs."

"Yes, yes," responded Sing Lee, "but no doubt there is an effort being made to create prejudice against foot binding."

"What right have they to intrude upon our home life, or to thrust their opinions upon those who do not desire them."

"Oh, the foreigners are not so much concerned about the etiquette of the case as we are. But, to tell the truth, I have had some serious misgivings upon the subject of foot binding, myself."

"You do not mean to say that you would discontinue it," exclaimed Ching Fo, in some astonishment.

"No," replied Sing Lee, "I am not ready to say that, but do you not think that the torture is unnecessary?"

Ching Fo was silent for some moments and then replied:

"No; what we prize in our women is the sacred thought which they hold toward motherhood. If given liberty to run about, their minds might be diverted and then, slowly but

surely, the generations to come would degenerate. Even admitting that in some cases women do suffer with their feet, that is less corrupting than to have the mind filled with thoughts alien to their high mission. In China there are but few immoral of either sex, and for that fact we are indebted to the purity and homestaying habits of the women. We hear much of the worship of women in the western countries; but theirs is only the worship of the young and the beautiful. We worship women whose faces have been transfigured by motherhood. It is only so that the divinity of women can continue."

"Oh," answered Sing Lee, "I am not ready to advise against foot-binding; but still I say that it is very painful and may some day come to be considered unnecessary."

"In that case," returned Ching Fo, "we shall be in the way to lose sight of one of the greatest of our moral safeguards."

"I am aware," agreed Sing Lee, "that our family code lays great stress upon prenatal damage and that, if women were allowed to run about freely, their thoughts might become corrupted and harm be done to the unborn. Yet if woman be compelled to suffer pain all her life on account of her feet, may not that also cause prenatal damage?"

"Probably, but not in the same way that the child is injured whose mother is a victim of sensual pleasure. Either love of dress or self indulgence may divert her motherly instincts and scatter sensuality through her body."

For a little time the two friends discussed the matter but arrived at no reasonable solution of its difficulties, so Ching Fo returned the poem to his sleeve and went out into the moonlit path. As he walked toward home, he felt a rankling in his heart toward all foreigners. For, even though he could not understand how, he felt

sure that they had aimed a blow at the ancient institutions of his ancestors.

"The whole western civilization is built upon a foundation of material gain," he meditated, and to honor the father and the mother and to live a life of abstemiousness is no part of their philosophy. They cannot appreciate our love for the ancient customs and they have no right to intrude upon our soil."

But this reasoning did not help him to solve the mystery of the poem. All he could see was that he believed it to have been written at the instigation of some foreigner and he hated them all.

Upon entering his own yard he closed the gate with a bang and after placing the heavy iron bars across it, he called his wife. That model of obedience made haste to answer and Ching Fo said, with some determination in his tone:

"It is time that the bandages be placed upon the feet of the third daughter. I therefore command thee to have everything done that is customary upon such an occasion."

To his surprise, for the first time in her life, the wife showed signs of unwillingness. At this he demanded of her a full confession of all that she thought and an explanation of how she had arrived at an opinion so in conflict with the traditions of their forefathers.

Then the wife timidly confessed that the women in the neighborhood had been talking and that they had heard of a new society in Shanghai, organized for the purpose of creating sentiment against the custom. She told him that the ladies who were interested were the wives of men in high position and that some of them went to the Buddhist temple to pray and she expressly assured him that they were not missionaries, nor teachers of a foreign religion. At

this juncture she took from her sleeve a copy of the North China Daily News and pointed her liege lord to an advertisement, of which the following is a true copy:

"TIEN TSU HUI." (Natural feet society.)

"President, Mrs. Drummond.

"PROVISIONAL COMMITTEE: (with power to add to its members.)

"Mrs. N. P. Anderson, Frau General-Consul Rock, Mrs. James Buchanan, Mrs. T. L. Bullock, Mrs. W. Dowdall, Mrs. Drummond, Mrs. Edkins, Miss Caskin, Mrs. Hipplesy, Mrs. H. C. Hodges, Mrs. George Jamieson, Mrs. T. R. Jernigan, Mrs. Little, Mrs. F. Julian Marshall, Frau Joh Nolting, Frau General-Consul V. Hass-Pertazzi, Dr. Elizabeth Reifsnieder, Mrs. Seaman, Frau Herman Sonne, Mrs. C. Thorne, Sra Dona Luisa De Uriarte, Signora Iside Volpicelli, Mrs. H. Parkes Wilkinson.

—Those names with asterisks are on the Executive Committee.

HON. TREASURER,

Mrs. Marshall, No. 1 Yuen-ming-yuen Road.

HON. SECRETARIES:

Mrs. Seaman, No. 70 Bubbling Well Road.

Mrs. James Buchanan, No. 2 Yuen-ming-yuen Road."

ORGANIZING SECRETARY:

Mrs. Little, Ichang.

"This society has been formed to distribute pamphlets, leaflets and pictures among the Chinese on the subject of the prevailing practice of foot-binding, to encourage the formation of leagues, and in other ways to influence native opinion. It also proposes to offer, from time to time, prizes for the best Chinese essays on the subject.

"The ladies of the Committee solicit donations of $1 and upwards, and also ask all those interested in freeing Chinese women from the bondage of this cruel custom, to seek out fresh

means of distributing literature, whether through the kind assistance of missionaries or of merchants, either foreign or Chinese, or better still, of personal friends.

"All ladies willing to help forward the objects of the society, in one or the other of these ways, are requested to send their names to one of the Shanghai secretaries, to be enrolled as associates. It is hoped that in all the outports, local Committees may shortly be formed, and that in this way all foreign women residing in China may be found united in doing what they can to save little girls from the torture of a custom that has nothing to recommend it save that it is the *custom*. The co-operation of Chinese ladies will be still more gladly welcomed.

"The object being to uproot a fashion rather than to combat a principle, it is especially hoped that ladies will, as far as possible, act on their

own initiative, each doing what she can in her own immediate circle, without waiting for instructions from the Committee, but acting as she thinks best to advance the aim of the Society, remembering that a fashion like foot-binding, which is not based upon reason, is quite as likely to be overturned by an appeal to good taste or good feeling as by the most learned of arguments."

When he had finished reading, she said in a pathetic voice:

"I have hobbled all my life on crippled feet and I would that I might save my youngest daughter from the torture. I understand that from your decision there is no appeal and that it were madness to disobey; but I most sincerely request that you consider the matter a little further. It may be that we have come to a new era when the torture of our female children can be omitted."

Ching Fo listened to her longer than she had expected and even weighed the matter carefully, but finally turned to her and said:

"I have seen the foreign women in Shanghai tramping about like men, and I know that their ideas of propriety are very far from the Chinese standard. Their feet are large and their dresses are drawn in at the waist in a way that would make a Chinese woman blush. Some of the best of them have been obliged to modify their apparel before introduction into our society. Women who deform their waists and expose their necks are not in a position to offer advice to us."

"No. But it does not necessarily follow that our little daughter would become immodest if she had natural feet," said the mother.

"When women can run about they are in danger of falling into bad habits; then comes neglect of duties and disobedience to husbands,

and then the foundation of the home is in danger. Women are not strong-minded enough to take care of themselves and it is necessary that men should regulate their lives for them. Women are honored for their virtues and not for their accomplishments, or because they can tramp about like men," replied Ching Fo. Then taking a copy of the Confucian Code from the shelf he read, "A woman requires no extraordinary talent; her countenance requires no exquisite beauty; her words require no fluent lips; her labor requires no high degree of dexterity. Let her be chaste, innocent, sober and economical. Let her preserve her modesty and choose her words. This constitutes female virtue."

"The binding of the feet," continued he, "is calculated to enhance all these charms. Suffering is the price of a subjugated will and women must be kept in subjugation. You must remem-

ber that the third daughter has in her keeping the welfare of a new generation and all that makes for its good must be fostered. What would Ting Ho say, when he comes to manhood, to find that his betrothed had large feet? It would not do. So, now I command thee to have the bandages placed on the feet of Ah Moy, number three, tomorrow morning."

"It shall be done," said the mother and she sorrowfully hobbled out of the room.

Soon after she was gone, Ah Fat called and the subject was again under discussion.

"Yes," said he, "I have seen the poem sent out by the anti-foot-binding society and I rather like it. I believe they are working in a way to do good. I have no daughters, but if I had, I think I should have them unbind. The custom causes great suffering and I see no reason why women may not be good wives with natural feet. I have heard it said that

some of the mission schools where the experiment has been tried have found it difficult to get husbands for their girls, however. It seems that the young men are more afraid of it than the older ones. The anti-foot-binding league is working in a way to make friends, I think. They intrude none of their western religion upon us, but write poems and conform to Chinese etiquette."

"But," remonstrated Ching Fo, "you must remember that in a great majority of cases the family life of the Chinese is happy and that the Chinese mother is the best of mothers. Would she continue to be so if she were allowed to run about wherever she pleases?"

"Yes," said Ah Fat, "they have the interest of their families at heart as much as the men have and they have sorrows enough without our inflicting them. But," said he pleasantly, "a daughterless man's opinion is of little value

and, after all, each of us must act according to his own judgment."

So they changed the subject and sipped tea until the hour of the rat, when by the light of the moon, Ah Fat took his rikisha for home.

CHAPTER V.

Mencius said thus:

"When heaven is about to confer a great office on a man, it exercises his mind with suffering and his sinews and bones with toil. It exposes his body to hunger and confounds his understanding and by all these efforts it stimulates his mind, hardens his nature and supplies his incompetences."

Ah Moy submitted to the process of foot-binding without a protest. Obedience, repression of emotions, and a strange indifference to physical pain, were inheritances bequeathed to her from uncounted generations of ancestors.

Bandages two and a half yards long by two inches wide were drawn around her feet in such a way as to force all the toes except the large one, under the soles. Twice a day, and

for many weeks, they were tightened, each time driving the toes further under, until they came peeping out on the inside of her instep. For the first year her nurse thought the muscles would yield to the pressure and retain the proper shape; but poor little Ah Moy's feet had more than their share of elasticity in them and every time the bandages were taken off, the muscles sprang back to their natural position until finally it became necessary to break the bones. After this was done and additional straps and bandages fastened around the instep, the toes kept their place, but in a few days became so swollen and painful that Ah Moy sat crying in her room all the day long. Her little sleeve dog gave her no more pleasure and she had to hang her feet over the foot-board of her bed so as to deaden the pain. Her father came and gave her opium and commanded her to move about, but her sufferings had gone to

a point where she could no longer obey. (The Italian Mother Superior at Han Kow, told the author of this book that, with the best of care, ten per cent. of the girls die during the ordeal of foot-binding.) Under her eyes came the great, black lines, and into her face came that curious shade of yellow that is never seen except in connection with foot-binding. Ching Fo and his wife both thought that more than likely the third daughter would die under the ordeal. She wasted to a skeleton and gangrene tore off great pieces of her flesh; blood poison spread through her system and fever painted scarlet patches on her cheeks.

But Ten Wang, the God of Fate, had it written in his book that Ah Moy was not yet to die, so he sent the spirit of healing to brood over her and after three years of suffering, the worst was over. The color came back to her face, she again found pleasure in insect music and

the song of birds; she heard the sighing of the pines and saw the shadow of the clouds, as they threw dark patches on the mountain side; and strange, oh passing strange, the refinement of torture through which she had passed, left upon her an irresistible charm—a charm which comes only to those who have suffered to the point of breaking. Ching Fo saw it and called the attention of his wife to the soft lines of beauty that had been wrought in their daughter's face.

"It is the subtle charm of the little-foot woman," said he.

"Yes, yes," replied his wife, "she is very beautiful. Sing Lee's family will, no doubt, be very proud of her."

"We must now look to her education," said the father. "She must learn to chant the Buddhist prayers, to embroider and even to make short rhymes. For although women are not

supposed to add much to literature, it is very becoming in them to compose verses."

Thus a new era began for Ah Moy. She learned to chant the long prayers that the priest gave her, and to drone them for hours each day; she embroidered butterflies and lotus leaves and entered into happy little contests with her father in verse making. On one occasion when she had gone with him for a walk, he was surprised to hear her compose a verse which to his trained ear, sounded well.

"Father," she said, "this place is so delightful that I feel as though I could compose a poem in its honor."

"Mayhap, if the bird sings in thine own heart, it augurs a son who shall be a poet," said her father, at which she turned her face away from him and repeated:

"A butterfly bright on the lotus is resting,
A bird in the shade of the rushes is nesting,

A cloud throws a shadow on father and
daughter,
And away goes my verse on the swift-running
water."

"Well done, Ah Moy; hadst thou been born a boy, I should have expected great things of thee. Canst thou repeat something from one of the ancient classics?"

"Shall I repeat the poem about the young man whose father died and left him so lonely, when he was young," she said.

"Yes, if you can do it well," replied the father.

But when she tried to begin, her eyes filled with tears.

"Oh father, it is so sad," she exclaimed.

"Yes," assented the father, "I remember the poem. It was written more than two thousand year ago by Liu Heng. But it is still a favorite

with many. If you can remember it I should like very much to hear it."

Ah Moy then turned her face away and recited each verse correctly.

"I look up and the curtains are there, as of yore,
I look down and there is the mat on the floor,
These things I behold but the man is no more.
To the infinite azure his spirit has flown,
And I am left friendless, uncared for, alone,
Of solace bereft save to weep and to moan.
The deer on the hillside caressingly bleat,
And offer the grass for their young ones to eat,
While birds of the air to their nestlings bring meat.
But I, a poor orphan, must ever remain,
My heart still so sad and o'er burdened with pain,
For him I shall never see coming again.
'Tis a well worn old saying, which all men allow,

That grief stamps the deepest of lines on the brow.
Alas! see my hair, it is silvering, now.
Alas, for my father, cut off in his pride,
Alas, that no more I may stand by his side.
Oh, where were the Gods when that noble man died."

Ching Fo was so pleased to hear her repeat the whole poem without a mistake and with so much feeling, that he pressed her little brown hand to his face, at which Ah Moy begged him to tell her a story or repeat a verse. So he sat down beside her and asked if she had not been learning to weave on her mother's hand loom that day.

"Yes, father, I have unwound a cocoon of the wild silk worm and woven it into cloth. But mamma says that I must not yet attempt the fine work of our own cocoonery."

"Then I shall tell you about the star, Vega, which is personified in Chinese literature as a woman engaged in weaving silk," said her father. "Vega is a brilliant white star in the constellation called Lyra, but on the seventh day of the seventh month of each year, the heavenly weaver leaves her loom and crosses over the milky way to meet her lover, who is called the bull driver, and the result of this heavenly union is an ever increasing cluster of bright and beautiful stars. The story typifies the earthly marriage, which has for its object the sacred duty of child-bearing. I think the time has come when I should tell you, my child, that only through self-control in the marriage bed can you insure to your offspring sound bodies and vigorous minds. To keep the thoughts away from sensual pleasure is a most important duty. Children that are deprived of an inheritance of pure thought while they are

yet unborn, come handicapped into the world, for Nature takes revenge upon the offspring for the sins of their parents. These are questions of pure morality which, by the custom of China, are given into the hands of the women. When you are older you will know that China has withstood the shocks and ravages of time, better than any other nation, and this is greatly due to the virtuous conduct of parents. Tell me, daughter, do you understand my meaning?"

"Yes, father dear, my mother and the nuns at the monastery have often told me that the welfare of the children lies in the hands of the parents. But, I think the story of the heavenly weaver the most beautiful one I have ever heard."

Such confidences made Ah Moy and her father very dear to each other. She knew that she was betrothed to Ting Ho and that she should owe to his family her untiring service;

but she had never seen him and her heart was every bit her father's. Her brother was now old enough to tyrannize over her and in many ways to command her. She had learned to treat him with ceremonious respect, never preceding him into a room nor partaking of food until he had been served; but in her heart of hearts she felt that hers was a higher mission in life than his. She felt that he represented the ancestral tombs while she represented the children to be born, and in fancy she could hear their voices ever counseling her to be faithful.

Both her sisters were now preparing their wedding garments, for both had, like herself, been betrothed in childhood. Ah Moy, number one, had been betrothed by a go-between to a young man who lived in another province. Aside from ascertaining that he belonged to a good family, Ching Fo knew little about him; how cruel and exacting he might be, there was

no means of knowing. Neither did it seem a matter of great moment to him. The marriage was in the interest of both families and this was the only thing to be considered. "You must have no opinions of your own" the father told his girls, "it is the duty of daughters-in-law to serve the family that adopts them. Among your wedding gifts will be the customary bottle of poison with which to end your life if it becomes unbearable; that is the only proper release from earthly trouble. It is an honorable discharge, and does not disgrace your parents."

Ah Moy, number one, understood; she knew that the new home to which she was going was for better or for worse, with no appeal except by death. But even so, she was very happy. No knowledge had she of privileges or rights; no spirit of desire had ever entered the calm repose of her mind. The wedding garments

were to be cut precisely alike; the embroidery was also of ancient design—butterflies and bamboo leaves, dragons and lotus flowers, interspersed with the ever-present cherry blossoms—made up the variety. The twenty pairs of shoes, the twenty pairs of linen trousers, the two wedding dresses, the silk bedquilts and curtains, the lacquer vases and porcelain bowls, all and all were to be in the same conservative style. Tedious and tiresome and for many days, the work continued; but at last the preparations were complete and the servants detailed to take the young woman to the home of her husband. Before she could go, however, the etiquette of China required that she should lament for a week, yea, even that she should weep and moan aloud, because she was about to leave her father's house and take up her abode among strangers. It was hard for the happy girl to lie face downward and keep the

outward semblance of sorrow; but it was not in the Ching Fo blood to omit any of the ancestral usages, so she tore her hair and assumed a sad look. Each day found her crying, with red eyes, (made so with vermilion) and uttering words of endearment for her family and friends. "Oh dear, it is so hard to leave home and go to live among strangers! Oh dear, I shall never see the home of my girlhood again!" and so on and so on.

The new home to which she was going was, as yet, a far off picture which she saw only darkly. She knew that she was leaving her father's house to take up the duty of child-bearing, in a family whose ancestral line was as jealously guarded as her own; but she had no idea of what the change might mean. So she cried according to rule until the appointed day, when there was hurrying of servants and gathering of goods and the formal leaving of

the parental roof. Beside her four chair bearers, there accompanied her two lantern bearers, two men to run ahead and six rikisha laden with her effects. She was very timid, for she had never been away from her home before, but she bore up bravely and "kept the face" as a woman should do. The etiquette of the occasion demanded that she must neither speak, nor partake of food, during the journey, so she sat tired and hungry for many an hour while her servants rested or slept in the shade of wayside trees.

After a two days journey she came to the house of her husband's family and found the incense sticks lit, the parents-in-law in their best clothes and a feast prepared for many guests. No lover's greeting however was in store for her, nor any kindly act to relieve her of fatigue. But when the door was thrown open she took her place beside her mother-in-

law. The guests came in swarms to be waited upon, to all of whom she bowed according to the prescribed rules and forms while she served them with tea and sweets. Sneering remarks about her clothes and her feet, brought no frown upon her placid brow and when some one threw straw upon her glossy hair, she bore it so patiently that her mother-in-law was much pleased. For three days the festivities continued, during which time the bride was not permitted to leave her post of duty, but the fourth day she was given to her liege lord whom she now beheld for the first time. In appearance he was far from what she had hoped, yet she received him with the calm exterior of a well-bred Chinese woman and went about her work as uncomplainingly as though she had selected a husband for herself. According to her philosophy of thought she was now face to face with some sin committed in a former life

which must be expiated by patient endurance, therefore she banished all thought of self, offered no disobedience to the father and mother who had so cruelly married her to their defective son and wrote no word of dissatisfaction to her own parents. Ten Wang had decreed it, was the only thought she permitted herself.

Two years after the wedding of Ah Moy, number one, occurred the "going out of the house" of Ah Moy, number two. Like her sister, she had been betrothed by a go-between and went a long way from home. The same elaborate preparations had filled Ching Fo's house; the same parental advice had been given and the same weeping and wailing had been performed by the bride for a week preceding the marriage.

Through it all, Ching Fo maintained the composure and dignity of a Chinese gentleman.

No anxious lines were permitted to knit his brow, although for several years in succession, there had been a scarcity of crops in the province, and ugly rumors of famine disturbed the neighborhood. When the two daughters were gone, his wife said to him:

"Let us wait a little before giving the third daughter in marriage. She is young and there is plenty of time."

"No," replied Ching Fo, "first consideration must be given to the great things of life and the great things are the settling of the domestic relations.".

"But if the drouth continues," questioned she, with womanly anxiety.

"If the drouth continues," he replied, "we shall bear it, I hope, as patiently as did our ancestors. Drouths have always come and gone. If this one continues, why then it continues. But it is not well to invite it. Specu-

lating upon misfortune is an invitation for it to come."

The third daughter had now become almost indispensable to her mother. Her nimble fingers were never tired of sewing and weaving and helping with the housework. The pretty clothes for her own wedding were being made and laid away, as time and means permitted, and the bird sang in her heart as it always does in the heart of the young and the good.

In spite of his habitual composure, anxious thoughts crept, from time to time, into Ching Fo's mind. His rice fields that were wont to look so beautiful and green beneath the summer sun, were parched and brown and the harvest which is promised to those who sow, was withering beyond recovery. He knew what danger lay in the falling brook and the yellow leaf and he could not prevent forebodings. Mile after mile of the marvelous

purple that characterizes the arid atmosphere quivered in the air and the mountains became apparitions that angled up to meet the unfailing blue of the sky. Occasionally at mid-day a high cloud lay motionless above a phantom peak, but it was the wool white cloud that throws no drops of water down. All this Ching Fo saw and his soul flitted out into the dazzling sea of color and was very sad. He felt an unknown fear, as though a crisis of some kind hung over him. For days at a time a psychic strain seemed to foreshadow misfortune. His wife and his third daughter saw the change in him and watched anxiously for the usual cheerfulness that characterized his life.

But as the days swept by, things grew worse instead of better, for rumors of foreign warships gathering in the ports, and ugly uprisings of the people, were added to other anxieties, and as Ching Fo looked away into the

purple mist, he saw that another apparition had taken its place beside the one called Drouth, an apparition no less terrible, whose name was War.

From time immemorial the evil spirit that dwells in foreign affairs had spread dismay among the Chinese; but now it threatened to tear asunder the nation. Ching Fo seldom mentioned these thing to the women of his household; but now he felt bound to explain to them that nothing could be so fraught with harm as to have the quiet of their home broken into by a swarm of foreign soldiers. Not much of this could Ah Moy understand, however; she thought that a few men might have to be sacrificed and a few homes bereft of their sons, but beyond that, the fears of her father were meaningless and failed to arouse anything more than a ripple on the smooth surface of her life.

The week of lamentation had now arrived and all her preparations were made for leaving home. With a pious sense of duty, she laid aside her work and assumed the garb of sorrow, for no act of hers should be left undone that might detract from the proprieties of the occasion.

"I would not disgrace my family," she said, "by appearing happy at leaving home."

So with loud moaning and crying, she lay face downward on the bed and repeated the words, as both her sisters had done, "Oh dear, I am so sad because I am about to leave my father and mother and go to live with strangers. Oh dear, I must now leave the home of my girlhood and go to the home of my husband!"

CHAPTER VI.

"I hate the threatening clash of arms,
When fierce retainers throng,
I hate the soldier's revels,
And the sound of fife and song.
But I love to seek a quiet nook,
And some old, old volume bring;
And hear the wild birds singing
And see the flowers spring."

—Wang Wu, 105 A. D.

But the signs were not right when the third daughter was born, and for this reason the God of Fate had it written in his book that she should be a child of mystery and grief.

"And having writ, moved on
And not her piety nor wit
Could lure him back to cancel half a line,
Nor all her tears wash out one word of it."

The happy days of lamentation, during which Ah Moy cried outwardly but inwardly was full

of joy, brought not the wedding day, for Ten Wang had already turned the river of her life into quite another channel.

Shut in from the outside world and her time filled with pleasant duties, Ah Moy had no conception of the fact that over China a storm gathered which would shake it to the very center. A more prophetic ear than hers might have heard the rumbling, and a more prophetic eye might have seen the darkness that was settling over the land; but the third daughter's heart kept the even tenor of its ways until the last day of her lamentation, when a sudden crash came out of the blue that turned her little world all upside down.

It was nothing new for that dark mountain called International Law, to smoke and occasionally throw up lurid flashes, but the little of it that reached the women was not enough to arouse anxiety. Their lives were too secluded

to be affected by ordinary political questions; but now, in the twinkling of an eye, as it were, there poured out of that dead old crater an Aetna of ashes which none could fail to see.

Sing Lee was the first to bring the news and to inform Ching Fo that his son who was so soon to be a bride-groom, had been called out to fight for his country.

"Pandemonium is loose," said he, as he slipped into a chair, "and the Righteous Defenders (Boxers) are preparing for an active campaign. The foreigners are again trying to pluck us as a housewife plucks a goose and we must drive them back."

"I feared it, I feared it," said Ching Fo, trembling with emotion, "on the Yang-tse, it is the English, to the north of us the Russian, while on the coast it is the Germans."

At this he groaned aloud and added, "we cannot endure it, we cannot endure it."

" 'Tis true and a pity it is," said Sing Lee, "it is useless for us to tell the foreigners that what the western world calls prosperity has no resemblance to our own ideas on that subject; it is useless to tell them that we do not wish to enter the turmoil of the world. They cannot appreciate the Chinese love for seclusion and reverence for ancient customs."

At this juncture in the conversation, Ah Fat arrived and informed the two men that the Righteous Defenders were gathering in the neighborhood and that, as they came to the rescue of the country without compensation, they must be fed and, if need be, clothed.

(The Righteous Defenders are a body of young men called in China, "Society Men" who meet in secret to watch and if necessary protect the home and ancient tombs.)

As this phase of the case came into Ching Fo's consciousness, he sprang quickly from his

chair and went into the open court, for now it was a case in which the women must be consulted. The amount of food which they could contribute and the number of charms and bandages they could prepare were questions which belonged strictly to their department. As he turned toward the kitchen, he saw that the street was full of wild-eyed runners and that everything was in a state of general madness. People were shouting to get themselves carried hither and thither and the poor coolie, finding himself belabored on every hand, poured into the din a constant jabber of dialect. At the back gate of the bungalow, frightened females were holding such counsel of war as only women can. The wife of Sing Lee had been among the first to arrive and had informed Mrs. Ching Fo of her son's response to the call of the Righteous Defenders. This meant, of course, that the young folks must wait for a

more auspicious time for their marriage. Ah Moy was still lamenting when her mother called her to come and hear what her prospective mother-in-law had to say. Before she could make herself presentable, however, a dozen more women had invaded the kitchen and were expressing their opinions concerning the situation.

"It is all the missionaries," said one woman, "they have made the spirits angry by selling coal oil to be used in the lamps. Everybody knows that our ancestors never used anything but nut oil on the shrines."

"Yes," said Lee Loy, "and those people build their houses without any regard to the effect upon the climate. That is another thing that makes the spirits angry."

Just then a wrinkled old woman was helped to her feet and gave it as her opinion that there were worse things than the missionaries:

"The railroads are creeping into the country and they do say that they lay their foundations on children's bones."

"Yes," cried another of these wise ones, "and they do say that the foreign devils use children's eyes in making their medicines."

Then Mrs. Ching Fo capped the climax by remarking that the foreign bible commanded a man to leave father and mother and follow Christ.

"Which, as you all know, is in direct conflict with the teaching of Confucius."

This produced such a storm of disapprobation that when Ching Fo appeared on the scene, he could not make himself heard. He stood for some moments waiting for the babel to cease, but as it continued, he took the wonder-eyed Ah Moy by the hand and returned to the front room.

"The women are swarming," he said, "and

I was not able to get a hearing. When they settle down a little, I will go back and see what can be done about food. They all seem to lay the trouble to the missionaries and perhaps they are right. Sometimes women are led into correct conclusions, even though they are only females."

Then Ah Fat testified that he also believed the trouble to be caused by the missionaries.

"All three of the religions of China are suited to the needs of the people; but Christianity is a renegade which we must drive out. I know that Confucius taught, twenty-five hundred years ago, that nation should not lift up the sword against nation; but if the foreigners persist in breaking into our country, we must drive them back. They are the intruders and they must take the consequences."

So chattered the women and so argued the men, and so gathered the storm which was

about to break upon their defenseless heads. The third daughter listened and wondered and tried to grasp the meaning of what she saw and heard; tried to understand why the men gathered in knots on the street and why the faces of the women were pallid with fear. And as she saw the fire creep into the calm eye of her father, a great desire seized her to become a part of the wild ocean that was lashing itself into foam. If martyrs were needed why might not she be one?

When a lull in the conversation gave her an opportunity she whispered in the ear of her father, a desire to help serve her country. But her patriotism received a check when he answered:

"A little foot-girl can do nothing. You must wait."

At which Ah Moy glanced down at her crippled feet and said:

"Yes, I can do nothing but wait."

It was noon before any definite plan had been fixed upon and the women induced to go about preparing food for the Righteous Defenders. The work, however, went bravely on when once it was commenced. Kettles of fluffy rice stood in long rows and pans of dried mushrooms with inviting squares of pork simmered over the fire. Bandages with which to wind the legs were prepared and many a good luck sign stitched upon blouses and shoes.

Toward night the men congregated at "The Hall of the Holy Country" to further discuss the situation and devise ways and means for the advancement of the cause. Patriotic pictures were hung on the walls of the building, and mottoes, selected from the writings of Chinese sages, were repeated or written by skillful hands on doors and lintels. The Righteous Defenders formed into long lines to

practice their mysterious drill and to turn their faces in the directions from whence come courage and spiritual enlightenment. They also invoked the Gods and the spirits of their ancestors. Ting Ho was with them—the embodiment of a superstitious Chinaman, calm, head erect, ceremoniously polite, without a flicker of emotion in his coal-black eyes, although he had sprung from home and wedding feast into the welter of war. On his blouse was embroidered that great symbol of purity, the lotus. Placed there by a virtuous mother, he held it as a sacred trust and as security that no thought of carnal desire should enter his soul. As he marched around the hall in line with his comrades, he lit an incense stick and reverently placed it in the ashes before the White Tiger, then wheeled and stood motionless beside his companion in arms.

As the evening grew apace, the old men came

in, one by one, to give counsel and speak words of encouragement. Leaning heavily upon a walking stick Ting Sin, a man of great age, pointed to a motto on the wall which read: "The strong shall not prevail", and in courteous language called the attention of the young soldiers to the fact that they were members of an ancient order which had, from time immemorial, sprung to the defense of its country. He reminded them that only men of unspotted reputation were eligible to their ranks and urged them to remember that they were protected by the Gods.

"It is," said he, "one of the oldest traditions of China that the weak may overthrow the strong. You are not training for public audiences nor for public display; but for a system of self defense, in the most exact sense of the word. You must rely for victory upon the strength of your opponent. If you are true,

there will come a power from heaven to turn away the bullets of your adversaries. The Gods are with you and you need not fear. We look to you for protection against an enemy who comes to despoil us of our homes. It is armed with prodigious weapons of destruction; but you have recourse to a higher power."

When he had finished speaking the young soldiers bowed, retreated three steps and bowed again, then wheeled and assumed a respectful attitude toward Ching Fo, who now began to speak. His voice came forth in the gentle tones of a man of sorrow; he disclaimed the honorable years and the eloquence of the distinguished gentleman who had preceded him; but he arose to call the attention of the Righteous Defenders to the fact that concessions granted to foreigners either for purposes of trade or for religious propaganda, had always resulted in the setting up of claims adverse to the wishes of China, by the newcomers.

"China," declared he, has no need of the outside world. When once the reins are relaxed and the western civilization established in our land, the end is in sight. The labor-saving machines, of which the foreigners boast so much, are not suited to our use. Our country is too densely populated to change its labor system. It has already come to pass," exclaimed he, raising his voice, "that the cotton mills of Shanghai have flooded the markets with goods which are sold at prices below that of our home weave and the result is, that in some cases, the little handlooms of the women are idle and the workers have died of hunger. But these facts are nothing to the foreign devil who wishes to sell his machinery. It must come that we shall drive this horde of intruders back."

Following him Ah Fat made a short but eloquent address. He quoted the words of a noted sage, who said:

"All the black-haired men are brethren and they shall prevail against the barbarians who come from other lands. Destiny has watched over you and prepared you for this day. The God of War is with you and you may command the hosts of heaven. Let them thunder with their death-dealing inventions. Yours is the greater force. Consider only this, that a holy cause confronts a huge and many-tongued intruder who will, if not driven back, despoil us of our homes. Remember, too, that when all else fails you have recourse to the Oriental suicide. It is a sacrament by which you may pass immediately into the arms of your ancestors. It is honorable and it is better than to permit yourselves to be taken by the enemy."

When he had concluded the Righteous Defenders again bowed and marched around the room, placing incense sticks before each mystic shrine; then passed out in single file to the place assigned them for the night.

Poor Ting Ho, the son to whom his father looked forward for support in his declining years, was even now but a memory. Child of a mother whose natural sense of rectitude was great but whose ignorance and superstition were also great, he had drawn in with her milk the excessive superstitions of his ancestors and was willing to trust to the spirits to save him from an enemy equipped with modern shot and shell.

For a few days the women worked steadily to prepare such articles as in their judgment would be of use to the men when on the march; money was contributed and a few old guns were collected, but still the equipments were far from adequate. Ah Moy's willing hands had helped with the clothing and other accessories of the soldier's kit and on the appointed day she stood with the married women and saw her betrothed march away.

CHAPTER VII.

Restless, I stand upon the beach and gaze,
Because I know not where my bark may be.
I see the mountains through an autumn haze,
I see the ships returning from the sea.
I see the farmer coming through the maize,
But none, O, no one comes to beckon me.
—*Wang Chi. 6th Century.*

A few tears shed in solitude, a few poems to commemorate the memory of Ting Ho, and a little shadow in her dark eyes, were all that told the story of the third daughter's wedding; for she was too well grounded in Oriental etiquette to exhibit any signs of grief or disappointment.

"Duty," she said to her father, "is the first law of Buddha, and I am content to leave events to heaven."

Nothing had ever happened to arouse in her

the passional nature. She had not even been permitted to feel the thrill of her lover's hand as he passed her father's gate to join the main army which lay two hundred miles away. (In the literature of China heroines are seldom depicted as charmers of men or as languishing for love, but rather as obedient daughters who are willing to sacrifice their lives for duty.) A few times she had seen him through the bars of her window, or through a crack in the fence and she knew that he was straight as an arrow and comely to look upon; but all other love was asleep in the far back recesses of her heart and she settled easily into the duties of the home life, with her mother. Her father told her that it was the duty of women to keep the look of a Buddha in their faces and to come into new conditions without complaint, and such was her training that she was able to obey.

After the excitement of helping off the sol-

diers was over, and life had fallen into its accustomed groove, Ching Fo turned his attention to the drouth which was now bearing down upon them with all the fury of an angry God. The people were restless and alarmed, and scarcity of food was making itself felt among the poor. The priests saw the need of doing something to allay the fears of their followers and therefore appointed a festival to the Rain Dragon. Ah Moy's nimble fingers were the first to begin sewing together the pretty pieces of silk which were to cover the great skeleton. For several days the women joined in the work and when it was finished the priests came down the hill, bringing an old frame, made of hoops and bamboo, and pumpkin eyes, over which they drew the silken skin, touching it here and there with gold, until gills and claws and eyes were one splendid glare of color. As the pious laborers raised the glittering thing to their

shoulders, Ah Moy thought that now the drouth would surely be broken; but the days continued to pass without a hint of rain, and she made excuses for the Gods very much as others do who pray and receive no answer.

Ching Fo, however, consulted an astrologer and learned from him that the planets prognosticated plagues and other occurrences which bring distress upon men. This information spurred him on to make still further attempts at pacifying the powers above. He kept fires of wormwood and chamomile burning before his door and contributed his much beloved son to a crusade which the priests started out on a march through the famine-stricken province. Two hundred boys were selected to assist at this pilgrimage, all of whom repaired to the temple and scourged themselves and submitted to other torture. They wore ashen colored garments fastened with yellow sashes, in the end

of which were points of iron to strike against their legs and keep the wounds already made there, open and bleeding. Incense and magnificent banners of silk and gold were carried before this procession and their entrance into each village was welcomed by the ringing of bells and the burning of paper money. As they passed from place to place, the people vied with each other in works of charity and good will; and gold and precious stones were contributed to the priests in such quantities that they became a burden. For forty days the crusaders kept moving from place to place, praying and casting out devils; but the sky remained as blue and the sun shone as fiercely as when they started.

The question of food was already acute on their line of march, and the stench of dead bodies arose from many a house. The scarcity of water was augmented by reports that some

of the springs had been poisoned and, taking it all in all, the crusade was abandoned.

Ching Fo's estate had suffered greatly, for it lay open to the horde of Righteous Defenders, who, unfed, unpaid, but strong in the faith that it was their mission to save China, went swarming over it, consuming whatsoever they could find to support life.

Ah Moy waited in primitive style for news of her lover,—but she had no possible means of knowing what had befallen him. Stories of the awful instruments of destruction that the foreign devils knew how to use, sometimes reached her ears, and stories of battles in which many were killed, crept from house to house. But Ah Moy was brave and kept on praying, never once losing sight of her high ideals.

In this way the summer slipped by and still there were no signs of rain. Time and time again had Ching Fo yielded up the food that

he had reserved for use in time of need; and time and time again had he divided with his suffering neighbors, until now he was convinced that in order to save the lives of his own family, he must flee from his famine-stricken home. To do so, the open road was his only resort. The water in the creek was much too low to admit of using a boat; his money was gone and his servants had long since been permitted to scatter in order, if possible, to save themselves from starvation.

His son had returned from the crusade discouraged and suspicious and everything seemed to indicate that there was still trouble in store for him and his family. In the rarefied air the mirage shimmered in the horrid mockery of water and the softest gauze lay fairy-like over the gaunt wolf of hunger and despair. Ching Fo, seeing all this, called his family together and explained to them that their only

hope was to flee in search of a more favored locality.

"Most of our neighbors have already gone," he said, "and it is hoping against hope for us to remain longer, so now I command you to prepare for the journey. Gather into bundles a change of raiment and a few utensils for cooking, and let us start as soon as possible."

No time was left to ponder over the case, for "He who feeds the ravens" had not fed them that day. It was a trying hour for Ching Fo, for he saw not only his starving family, but he felt what dens and depths were in his own heart. As he beheld the scene of desolation before him, there seemed no hope, no God, no justice. Neither the young nor the old, neither the brave nor the beautiful were spared, and he questioned how worthy of worship was He who permitted such things to be. Ah Moy noticed the agony in her father's

face and clasped him in her arms while, for one brief moment, their tears mingled. But there was no time even for sorrow and they at once made preparations for the trip.

Ching Fo clothed himself in a heavy silk tunic, with strong linen trousers and under the tunic he buckled a girdle to which was attached his tobacco pouch and a pocket for money, both of which were pathetically empty. On his right side in a leather shield, he fastened a knife which was an heirloom in the family. Could it have spoken it might have told of the savage heroism that had been practiced by them; a heroism that feared not to spill blood if occasion required it. Even little Ah Moy knew the etiquette of the Oriental suicide down to its minutest details.

Ching Fo drew the knife from its case and tested its edge, and as he did so there came into his face an expression of great firmness. At

this moment his son, dressed for the journey, entered and took his place beside his father; and when the women came they were ready for the start.

Ching Fo, protector of his kindred and preserver of his ancestral tombs, leading his family out of a famine stricken district, was but a repetition of his ancestors who had, in ages long since, been swept into the bosom of the past. No modern method of tiding over a period of famine, found favor in his eyes. Steam and electricity, he regarded as innovations not for a moment to be considered. With lowered head, as one who sees not but goes forward only because he must, he turned into the road that led out toward the old King Shang monastery.

"We will make straight for the King Shang," he said to his wife, "and from there we may hope to start better prepared for our journey."

"How far is it to the King Shan?" asked his son.

"At least ten miles, but with patience, we may reach it today," replied the father.

"It is hard for the women with their bound feet," ventured the son, "my feet are strong from having gone with the crusaders; but, father, can mother and Ah Moy walk so far?"

"It is hard," replied his father, "but it is a case of necessity. Left here, they would die of hunger, or perhaps the foreign soldiers might find their way to them, in which case no true Chinese woman would be willing to live."

"Oh, father, let us wait, for already mother and sister are far behind," exclaimed the son, looking anxiously back.

"We will go to yonder wall," said Ching Fo, "for just there I see an old bamboo tree, at the roots of which there may be young shoots. If we should be so fortunate as to find some, they

will relieve us of hunger and give us new strength."

They soon came to a place where a bamboo tree was spreading its sere and yellow leaves over a desolate home and, by digging into the ground, found young roots which were tender and delicious. Ching Fo threw the bundle from his back and took from it a small kettle, into which he put the sprouts and by the time the mother and daughter came up, he had ready a light repast. It was a spare breakfast after a long walk, but it gave them courage to go on and to trust Ten Wang to bring them safely to the end of the day. After the breakfast, Ah Moy and her mother spoke but little, yet hand in hand, they pressed forward, making a brave effort to keep up with the men. As the sun grew hotter they suffered terribly with their feet but in their faces was the look of stolid endurance, so characteristic of the Chinese woman.

Occasionally the little party fell in with some one going their way, but for the most part the country was deserted. Starving dogs glared at them as they passed and buzzards sat in solemn inquest over the bleaching bones of the victims of the drouth. Many times Ching Fo and his son sat down by the wayside to wait for the women, and many times they fell far behind. But the day passed and as the mists of evening began to gather over the distant mountains, the old monastery came in sight. Ching Fo's trained eye was the first to catch a glimpse of it, as it loomed grandly against a low range of foothills.

"Blessed be Buddha," he exclaimed, turning to his wife. As he glanced back, he saw that Ah Moy was pale and trembling and that a tear had left its mark in the dust on her cheek. The sight of the noble building, however, encouraged her and she made renewed efforts.

In fancy she saw Quan Yin and in fancy she heard the bells calling to evening prayer. In this sweet attitude of mind she bore her sufferings until they all stood together upon the stone steps of the old King Shan.

"Blessed be Buddha," again exclaimed the father, and all the family repeated the sacred text. When they had rested for a few moments they entered the heavily timbered gateway and passed on to an avenue lined with long rows of stone lanterns, which led to a small temple and thence to a priests' house. Ching Fo was surprised to observe that the saucers for oil in the lanterns were empty and his hand trembled as he struck the old bronze bell. An aged priest opened the door and Ching Fo asked with great courtesy whether it would be possible for him and his family to remain within the walls for a few days.

The priest raised his hand in token of wel-

come, took down a bundle of keys from which he selected one and led the way back to the monastery. As he opened the door Ching Fo was horrified to see that the "Merciful Hearer of Prayers" lay face downward on the floor, and further on the Dragon King, so lately carried by the pious laborers lay broken, with great patches of its silken skin cut away by sacrilegious hands. These sights sent a thrill of terror through his heart, such as he had never before felt. He turned back and with a gesture of despair said to his wife,

"Nothing but desolation is here," then turning to the old priest he asked what, in the name of heaven, had caused this ruin.

"The building has been looted by the foreign devils," replied the priest, "and everything of value has been carried off."

"Is there no rice?" piteously asked the son.

"A small portion of rice," answered the

priest, "shall be yours, but beyond that our hands are empty."

The priest then returned to his quarters and with his own hands prepared a small bowl of rice for each member of the family. While he was gone, Ching Fo explored a little further into the building and found that all the idols had been more or less mutilated and that much that was sacred had been carried off by the pillagers. After the priest had returned and they had eaten their portion of rice, they gathered a hard pillow from the fragments around them and lay down to await another day. The mockery of the sky continued, and the sun went down in a wild welter of color; its golden rays crept through the windows and tinted the walls of the old monastery with richest hues, while the creek outside lifted up its voice in song and the

"Firefly lovers flew over the wall,

Through the dim, pathless air, to a firefly ball."

But the beauties of nature which at another time would have given Ching Fo and his family intense pleasure, were now lost in the sadness of their thoughts. Hour after hour they remained awake, trying to grasp the meaning of the woes that had befallen them. At last the children sank into the sleep of the tired young; but into Ching Fo's wide open eyes, there came forerunners of the darkest hour he had yet seen. Before him was the parting of the ways. His son, the protector of the family tombs and the successor to his family name, was on the one side, while on the other was Ah Moy, the idol of his heart. Between these two he must now choose. It was not a question for a Chinaman to long ponder over, for with the money he might receive for his third daughter, he could remove his wife and son to a place of

safety; and when the Rain God saw fit to pour out a sufficient quantity of water, upon his parched fields, he could return to his home and continue the family worship. He knew that in all places where famine held its deadly sway the slave dealer was sure to come to purchase the fairest girls, and he thought, in the agony of his heart, that Ah Moy ought to bring a large sum of money; she was old enough to be immediately available for a wife; the danger of foot-binding was past; her education was properly finished and, what was more, she was very beautiful. These were the thoughts that haunted Ching Fo and drove every possible chance of sleep from his eyes. So he arose and went out into the moonlit garden.

In the gray of the morning his wife joined him and there, beneath the trees made sacred by the worship of ages, that grand committee of two, the father and the mother, unfolded to

each other the plan by which they hoped to save the family shrine.

"To sell the third daughter," said Ching Fo to his wife, "is, indeed, a trial, but I fear that to all our other woes, this intolerable one must be added. The straits into which Ten Wang has brought us, compel me to entertain the thought."

"I knew it before your honorable speech was made," replied his wife, "if it must be so, it must be so, and the details are left for you to work out. Are there slave dealers in this vicinity," she asked sadly.

"I presume there are," replied her husband, "they usually swarm about places where men in financial distress are apt to come."

"But what if Ting Ho, the son of Sing Lee, should return?"

"There is but little hope of such an event, for during all the time that he has been gone,

his father has heard nothing from him," replied Ching Fo. A long conversation followed, during which neither uttered a sigh nor shed a tear, so bred in the bone was the Chinese etiquette of concealing the emotions. The deep sorrow they were enduring, however, bowed their heads and furrowed their brows, and when the sun came in stately splendor over the mountain crest, they turned their faces eastward, hoping that the deep spiritual enlightenment, which comes with the early morning, might make the poor world fret seem a little less. After inhaling deeply, Ching Fo arose and went into the monastery to see if, perchance, Ah Moy's young heart was able to bear such a strain.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Fine words and an insinuating appearance, are seldom associated with virtue. The doings of heaven have neither sound nor smell."

—*Confucius.*

With slow and faltering step Ching Fo approached his daughter, whom he found seated upon a bench at the side of the monastery. When he reached the spot he laid his hand almost reverently upon her head and said with painful emotion:

"Daughter, all my life I have revered the Gods and have believed in the spirits of my ancestors. Yet, at this moment, I can see but one malicious monster ruling the world. Driven by his evil hand, I am compelled to say that whilst thou are my beloved daughter and thy mother and I bless the day that thou

didst enter our unworthy home, I see no way to tide over the distress into which we have fallen but to sell thee to a slave dealer. I have not the right to cut off my family line while a female child can be made use of to bridge over the dilemma. The question that confronts me now is that of saving the heir to the ancestral line. There are three things of which a superior man stands in awe; first, he stands in awe of the ordinances of heaven; second, he stands in awe of the words of the sages; third, he stands in awe of the customs of his ancestors. All these things compel me to protect my family shrine. To do so, thy brother must receive first consideration. It is to him that we look for the preservation of the family tomb; it is to him that the spirits of our ancestors look for the perpetuation of the family name."

Thus spoke Ching Fo and right royally did his little daughter answer him:

"Father dear, do not look so sad! I know that, having been born a girl, I am only a burden in such a time as this and whatever you think best I shall willingly accede to. It is ordained by the Gods that women shall be slaves and I may as well obey a master as to obey the mother-in-law to whom I should have owed my services had I been married to Ting Ho. Do not worry about me for I shall go willingly into the slave dealer's hands, if you so decide. I know that you can get money enough for me to care for mother and brother until the rain comes and then you can go back to the old home and the old life."

The courageous spirit of his daughter saved Ching Fo much of the sting which the interview would otherwise have given him. He took her hand and together they went to the mother who was waiting beneath the tree. For one sad hour all three sat with faces to the east, endur-

ing bravely the sorrow that had come to them. In the still air they could hear voices outside the wall and they could see the top of a sail which they knew must belong to some house-boat; but they were too much absorbed in their own affairs to wish to see strangers, so they went quietly back into the monastery and commenced to fold the garments they had worn during the night. When they had finished Ah Moy said, pointing to the idols:

"Father dear, may we not go around the room and repair some of the damage that has been done to the images, before we go?"

"Yes," replied Ching Fo, "it is proper to do what you can to that end. The damage done by a barbarian may be repaired by a woman's hand, but the barbarian is an object of contempt."

"Then let us raise up Quan Yin and put her in her place," said Ah Moy. The two women

lifted the Goddess back and then went to the Virgin Mother. The lily was still in her hand, but her face was turned to the wall and the child, which had lain on her breast, had been placed beside the God of War. Ah Moy could not restrain her tears.

"Tell me, oh tell me, dear mother," she said, "why it is that the foreign people treat our sacred symbols with contempt."

"I cannot answer, my daughter, all we can do is to bring the infant back and stand it beside its mother."

They turned the face of the Virgin around and carried back the child and were proceeding to the God of a Thousand Hands, when they heard the voice of Ching Fo calling them and saying:

"We must go on now, for it will be much easier if we walk before the heat of the day."

Thus commanded the women left the broken

idols and prepared to go. The son, although he had lost some of the buoyancy of the day before, took his place beside the father and all was ready for the start when, suddenly, a shadow darkened the doorway and caused them all to turn in that direction. There they saw a Chinaman, sleek, well fed, and wearing the regulation suit of black linen, that proclaimed him to be of the merchant class, approaching them. He shook his own hands as he advanced and bowed low and ceremoniously.

"Like yourself, honored sir," he said, "I am a visitor to this noble temple," but as he spoke he cast a searching glance at Ah Moy, which so angered Ching Fo, that he replied with freezing politeness,

"The temple is before you, sir," and immediately started to take up the day's journey. Seeing that the little party intended no further conversation, the newcomer, still looking at Ah Moy, said,

"Honored sir, you seem weary and travel stained. May I ask from whence you came and whither you go?"

"We have come from the Tien Dong and we go to the Shan Tung province," was Ching Fo's terse reply.

"Your locality has suffered much," said the stranger, "our country is beloved of the Gods, if we may believe that old saw which says, 'the Gods persecute whom they love'."

"The Gods," replied Ching Fo, "are far beyond us. All we can do is to follow the line of duty and leave events with heaven."

"Yes, yes," assented the stranger. "It is futile to attempt to pacify the Gods. It is, however, very sad to see the ruin that sacrilegious hands have wrought in this old monastery."

"Yes, oh yes," replied Ching Fo warmly, "it appears that the day has not yet come for the

brotherhood of man. But it does seem that nations might abstain from committing highway robbery in adjusting their differences."

"Yes," agreed the stranger, "the despoiling of this place was entirely unnecessary and was carried out with the savagery of the foreigner."

"How so?" asked Ching Fo, relaxing his cold demeanor and showing a keen interest in what the stranger had to say.

"I chanced to be near here and in a measure, to be a witness of the fiendish work. My houseboat was moored just below in the creek, when a party of foreigners surrounded me and demanded any information I might have concerning the treasure in the building."

"Ah, indeed!" exclaimed Ching Fo, "then you were really a witness."

"Yes, as I said, chancing to speak a little 'pidgin', I was put upon for information. Of course my knowledge of English failed me and

I answered all questions with 'no savee;' but they were bent on mischief and this is the result. The priests," he went on, "were powerless and as their supply of food was limited, they fled to the temple of Ko Shin."

"It is deplorable," said Ching Fo, and again attempted to throw the bundle containing the family possessions over his shoulder.

"Are you properly equipped for your long walk," asked the stranger. "I have provisions and to spare in my boat. They are yours, if you will accept them."

At this Ching Fo softened his voice a little and asked, "To whom am I indebted for this kindness?"

"I am Quong Lung," replied the stranger, "and it gives me pleasure to serve so noble a brother."

The faces of the little party brightened, for although they courted hardship and took a keen

delight in testing their powers of endurance, their sufferings had already gone to a point where the ancient spirit threatened to give way.

Quong Lung, seeing that they were willing to accept his proffered food, stepped to the door and clapped his hands in signal for a servant to come from the boat. In a few moments two coolies presented themselves and their master instructed them to bring food. The coolies hastened back to the boat and soon returned with bountiful supplies. By this time Ching Fo suspected that his benefactor was a slave dealer who had followed him for the purpose of taking advantage of his trouble and he hated him and all his kith and kin of tradespeople. An old poem came to his mind and he repeated it almost audibly,

"What is the good man and the wise?
Oft-times a pearl which none doth prize,
Or jewel rare, which men account,
A common pebble and despise.

Set forth upon the world's bazar,
It mildly gleams; but no one buys."

As he turned back and saw the wasted figures of his wife and children, he threw aside his scruples and squatted with them before a large bowl of rice.

This was what Quong Lung had hoped for, since he was a shrewd enough judge of human nature to know that business progresses better on a full stomach than on an empty one. He had the Chinaman's patience and the Chinaman's devotion, for while he waited for the family to finish eating, he loitered among the idols and lighted incense sticks or threw wads of paper at the God of Good Luck. After the meal was over Ching Fo's tobacco pouch was filled, for the first time in many weeks; water chestnuts were brought in from the boat and later, tea and rice wafers and sweets. Before the meal was finished the slave dealer joined

the group and tried to adjust himself to their society. As the sun crept up and stood directly over the old cryptomeria tree, the men strolled out and sat beneath it. There the birds were singing and the insects droning the music that the Chinese love, but in the shadow beneath the tree, sat a shrewd and prosperous merchant eating out the heart of a helpless scholar. With the cunning of a Jew, Quong Lung beat off the shock which he knew would be given Ching Fo, if he boldly opened negotiations for the purchase of Ah Moy. He talked about the drouth, the foreign devils and the chances of rain; but not a word of the girl until the shadow of the tree stretched long toward the east. At last he said significantly,

"Your daughter is a very beautiful girl. I wonder you have not married her before now."

"She has been betrothed since babyhood to the son of Sing Lee," answered Ching Fo, "but

alas! her intended husband has been sacrificed on the altar of his country."

"Well, then, it is no more than proper that she should be given to another," said Quong Lung, "I have much demand for girls who are old enough to be married. Is your daughter's health good?"

"Her health is excellent," replied Ching Fo, "my family have been subjected to great hardships since the drouth and the girl looks a little thin; but with proper food, she will soon regain her flesh."

"Yes, probably so," assented Quong Lung, "but you know that some girls grow ill and faded when taken away from their parents. All things combine to make investment in girls uncertain. If I could be sure of finding a purchaser for her very soon, I should be glad to offer you a liberal price but, taking everything into consideration, I cannot afford to pay more than five hundred taels for her."

"She is no coolie," exclaimed the father angrily, "that is no more than the price of a common coolie. This is the daughter of Ching Fo whose name is known and honored throughout the province. It is only because the iron hand of poverty is upon me, that I consider her sale at any price. I have but one son, kind sir, and it is my duty to protect him at whatever cost. You certainly are aware that such girls as my Ah Moy are only to be purchased in times of distress."

Quong Lung, however, was callous to the matter of sentiment. He wanted to buy, but at the lowest possible price. So he replied very carelessly,

"Oh very well, there are many girls for sale and my experience is that they are usually only consumers of rice."

Every word of this haggling about the price was iron driven into the soul of Ching Fo. He

knew that the color would come back to the cheek of Ah Moy as soon as she had plenty of food and that, under favorable circumstances, she was very beautiful. The designs which Quong Lung had upon him were so apparent that he trembled in rage.

"The mind of the superior man is conversant with righteousness," he quoted to himself, "but the mind of the mean man is conversant with gain." He wondered if righteousness was to be desired at such a frightful cost, and he wondered if it would not be better to exercise his legal perogative and slay the two women, and thus disencumbered make his way with his son to a place of safety. So the day wore on and at sunset he had arrived at no definite conclusion.

It was dark when Ching Fo, still brooding over the problem, returned to the monastery. His wife and daughter came and sat beside him in silence and the stars were twinkling ere

they lay down upon the hard floor to spend another night. But when a new day formed in the east, Ching Fo faced it with the courage of a man who has gone through the deep waters and found a landing place on the other side. He arose, walked firmly to the bank of the creek, and motioned Quong Lung to his side.

"It is useless to prolong the agony," said he, "neither my family nor myself can see any way of escape and it were better that we close the bargain."

Thus ended the parley and thus the daughter of Ching Fo became the property of Quong Lung. The contract was drawn up by the slave dealer and so ingeniously worded that Ching Fo did not notice at first the omission of the usual clause which provides that the slave shall not be used for immoral purposes. When he saw the defect his blood boiled anew, but he did not dare expostulate, lest Quong Lung

should take advantage and reduce the price, which was barely sufficient to enable him to take his family out of the danger of starvation. Under these circumstances, he signed the document and returned to the monastery to inform the women and to say a last word to his third daughter, from whom he now expected to part forever. Both women knew by the expression on his face that the moment had come and both struggled bravely with their emotions. Ching Fo's step as he advanced to take Ah Moy by the hand and lead her to the door where Quong Lung was waiting to receive her, was that of a man grown old in a single night.

"My child," said he, "you must go with Quong Lung and obey him and be as good a slave as you have been a daughter. The most painful part of the whole matter is, that I have not been able to secure the usual clause in the contract of sale to protect you from dishonor.

It is customary for the Chinese slave dealer to sell his young women for wives and it is most likely that some good Chinaman will buy you to raise sons to his ancestral line. But, daughter, there is a possibility that it may not be so, and if it comes to a choice between shame and death—you must choose only death." Saying this, he took from his girdle the knife which he so valued as a family possession and handed it to her. Ah Moy understood and without hesitancy took the knife and hid it in her sleeve. Then she followed her father to the door where Quong Lung, with the expression of the man who has made a good bargain, received her. Both parents turned their faces to the wall as she was led down the steps.

Ah Moy bore up bravely until she stepped upon the plank which reached from the bank to the boat, but then overwhelming sorrow swept over her and she broke into a fit of weeping.

"It is another cry-baby that he has bought," grumbled one of the oarsman, casting a glance at the distracted child. But Quong Lung spoke to her kindly, saying,

"There now, do not cry, little one, perhaps I shall sell you to a rich mandarin, who will give you plenty of clothes and make you a great lady. You know, do you not, that the empress was once sold for a slave and that it was because of her good conduct that she was adopted by a high official and finally became the handmaiden of the emperor."

But the third daughter of Ching Fo was too unhappy to be elated by the story. To her excited imagination Quong Lung looked as pitiless as did the God of War when she took the stone infant from him to restore it to its mother. But she soon recovered herself and true to her Asiatic training, sat down and waited patiently for whatsoever might be the next step in her new life.

CHAPTER IX.

"As to the way in which men gather riches, honor and advancement, there are but few whose wives and concubines are not ashamed of them and weep together on account of them.

—*Chinese Classic.*

The house boat of Quong Lung was a good one although small, made small on purpose that it might be available on creeks when the water was low; for it was when the water was low and drouth was abroad in the land that he reaped his richest harvest. It was built after the fashion of a thousand years ago and was itself moss grown with age. Over the center a canvas was stretched on ribs of bamboo and high above, like the wing of a bird, was a sail of enormous size. At the stern of the boat was a great bent-handled sculling oar, which was manipulated by coolies, stripped to the waist.

On occasions, however, when the water was low, the whole crew jumped overboard and pulled like horses. It was made to live in, this land-and-water caravansary; for its owner was a man whose main business in life was to live. There were comfortable beds and well-filled cupboards, tobacco, opium, and bottles with foreign labels upon them, for he had lived in San Francisco. On a little shelf against the side of the room was an image of the River God, in front of which stood a bowl of ashes, showing that incense had been burned there. Beside the fragrant incense there were other smells—some of which reeked to heaven; odor's of bilge water, dried fish and sea cabbage mingled with the black smoke; the latter, however, was reserved for occasions when the boat was stuck fast in the mud, for Quong Lung never permitted pleasure to interfere with business. On the bow of the boat was painted an enor-

mous eye, the eye of the Water Dragon, which has occupied a place on Chinese boats since the memory of man runneth not to the contrary. What it meant, no one knew; but it was a good luck sign and Quong Lung thought it a safe plan to have the good luck signs wherever they belonged. For the Three-toed Dragon he kept a cup of tea and a bronze gong, each clang of which was a signal for an offering and a prayer.

The foreman differed not from the crew except that he wore a shirt and stood on top of the bamboo frame, when the boat was in motion, and uttered such words as more civilized men utter to horses when the wagon is stuck in the mud. He also shouted warnings to everybody in sight:

"Don't you see this fine boat, all you little mud-scrapers? Get to one side, or I will run you down. Hey there! thou son of a louse,

clear the way," etc. His ability to intimidate the small fry constituted his chief value as an overseer, for nothing short of it could arouse the multitude that swarmed upon the water. After his work was done, however, this indefatigable foreman squatted, with the rest of the crew, around a bowl of fish and rice. Quong Lung commanded better things—pork and lily bulbs and Sam-shu.

Ah Moy soon got over her fright and was timidly preparing to eat the food which the cook had sent her when, to her surprise, another girl rolled out of the bunk and came and sat down by her side. She was a pretty girl, modest and silent, but with eyes that looked straight into the faces of men. This peculiarity Ah Moy had never seen before in any woman and she at once concluded that the girl was not all Chinese. Another sign of foreign blood in this strange girl was the softness and the tendency

to curl in her blue black hair. Ah Moy, in her secluded life, had met only girls in her own rank and their repose and studied passionlessness were in sharp contrast with the nervousness and restlessness of this girl by her side.

It was a sad awakening for Ah Moy to find herself in comradeship with one who bore none of the marks of the society to which she was accustomed, and at first she felt a strange reluctance about accepting the situation. Happily, however, the two spoke the same dialect, which fact made it impossible for them to go on together without such friendship as springs from mutual sorrow. Ah Moy felt for her new acquaintance great pity and tried to allay her fears, which were greatly exaggerated. After a few days the girl confided to her that her name was Wing and that her father was an American. During a famine her mother had been sold for money to keep the rest of her

family alive, and to tide over a period when wives were scarce, the American had bought her and installed her as mistress of his house. She had served him faithfully, stood between him and the extortions of her own people and borne him a daughter. Wing remembered her father, for he had been kind and liberal so long as he had need of her mother. But when another wife came in a great ship from San Francisco, she carried him off to a fine house on a fashionable street and they saw him no more. Her mother had found her way back to the parental roof, but no one wanted the half-breed girl, so she was given to an old woman who raised her as a servant. She was deeply attached to her mistress, but when the drouth came there was scarcity of food and Quong Lung had bought the girl for a trifle. All this pitiful story Wing told between hysterical bursts of weeping.

Her manner astonished Ah Moy even more than the story. But she soothed her and combed the tangles out of her unkempt hair and told her about Kali, the mother who tears the hearts of her children only to prepare them for her blessing. (Kali is a hideous blue idol who stands with a drawn sword in her hand while, with her feet she tramples upon her children; but she represents to the Asiatic mind the wonderful force that punishes in order to save.)

To Ah Moy the vague unfolded romance which lurked in Wing's conversation was very puzzling—always a lover or some grand knight coming to her rescue, always power and riches in store for her and always the thought of the opposite sex. Quong Lung noticed it and said to himself, "Wing is a typical Eurasian, a child of lust with the good burned out of her. Physically she is weakened and passionally she is overdeveloped."

Ah Moy was distressed at the dislike which Quong Lung expressed for the poor girl and tried to protect her, but she soon found that Wing's heart was a sepulcher haunted by phantoms of which a Chinese girl could conceive only in the vaguest way.

"Tell me, dear Wing," said Ah Moy one day, "why you talk so much about men and money?"

"Oh," replied Wing, "is it not the way with fine people to have riches and lovers?"

"I think not," returned Ah Moy, "these are strange subjects which I cannot understand. Marriage seems to me to be a duty for the performance of which the parents will make arrangements in due time, and any love not sanctioned by their wish or any love in which the mother-in-law is not entitled to the services of the daughter-in-law, is to me a puzzling enigma."

"Then," piteously said Wing, "it must be

the foreign part of me that thinks wrong. That is what my mother used to say."

To Ah Moy the subject of heredity was a sealed book, but she was conscious that between herself and Wing was an impassable gulf that grew wider as they ate and drank and slept together. This caused her deep sorrow, for the circumstances under which they were living made her feel a strong desire to be of service to her slave girl companion. How to accomplish this, however, was a problem that Ah Moy's young mind had no way of solving.

Wing felt the cloud that hung over her and made pathetic efforts to overcome the prejudice that she knew Ah Moy felt and, in many ways, she improved under the gentle tutorship of her self-appointed teacher, but

"Bred in the shade of a hedgerows' bloom
By an idle one's caprice,"

she was burdened with impulses that swayed

her even as the wind sways a young and tender plant. Quong Lung had owned many a half-breed girl and he understood the handicap under which she labored; but he had bought her for a mere song and expected to sell her to the flower boat folk as soon as he reached the market

The boat had now worried through the shallow waters of the creek and was in a river with a strong current to the south. A few days more would bring them to the grand canal, after which there was a direct line to Shanghai, where Quong Lung hoped to dispose of his cargo and then return to the famine district for more.

Wind and weather favored; the girls were well fed and everything about them a miracle of beauty, and except for an occasional pang when they thought about home, they were quite happy. At times the boat lay in shadowy

depths with fish darting beneath and sometimes strange water-fowl arose with a whirr of wings, only to drop down again when the first alarm had subsided. Along the banks were huddled houses with no visible way of approach. Tall bamboos hung over broken walls while, higher up, crooked paths led to shrines. In other places acres and acres of ducks covered the water while, sitting idly upon the bank, the Chinese husbandman waited for them to dive for fish and moss. Sometimes as the house-boat came plowing into the flock, a shrill whistle from their owner sent the ducks scrambling onto a large raft nearby and they went sailing out of sight.

The next hour perhaps they saw boat-loads of coffined dead being carried to their ancestral tombs. Accompanying each party were hired mourners, music and priests who dabbled their yellow robes in the mud.

Upon one occasion a fleet of tiny straw boats covered the water.

"I must tell you about this ceremony," said Quong Lung as they watched the little boats float by.

"Oh do," exclaimed both girls, "for this is the most beautiful funeral we have yet seen."

"Well then," replied Quong Lung, "Hong Fang, who gives this celebration in honor of his mother, is a man of great wealth, who has become so imbued with religious ideas that he can remember his former incarnations. He has also devoted so much time to spiritual attainment that he is able to see the spirit of his mother who has been dead for many years. Often he sits alone in the dusk of the evening and lights the spirit recalling incense and slowly her face takes shape and hovers in the smoke, but the time has now come when her spirit must go to another sphere and she will

no longer be able to command the forces by which she materializes; so he gives her this grand celebration, known throughout China as the 'Ceremony of Farewell'."

"Oh," said Ah Moy, "I have often heard my father speak of this festival and call it the most beautiful one known to China. Is there not a written message in each little boat?"

"Yes, in each little boat there is a scrap of paper folded with ceremonious precision, upon which is written a message of farewell," saying this, Quong Lung reached out with a bamboo pole and hoked up one of the tiny craft for the girls to examine. They were greatly interested and unfolded the poem which was addressed to the "Honorable Feng Tu, emperor of the dead." Inside the paper was written, "On behalf of my mother, greeting and much joy." Ah Moy as soon as she had read it creased it back into the original folds and asked

Quong Lung to set it afloat, saying in gentle tones,

"It might grieve the spirit mother to lose even this one."

For hours the little boats covered the water with their twinkling lights, but by morning they had all drifted away and instead of a funeral service the girls saw numbers of fishing boats upon which were rows of cormorants solemnly looking into the water.

"Only see the cruel iron rings around their necks," exclaimed Ah Moy, as the birds twisted their heads in an effort to throw off the burden.

"Those are to keep them from swallowing the fish," explained Quong Lung, "there would be no profit in keeping them if they did not give up what they catch."

"I should not wish to torture the poor birds," said Ah Moy, "for the sake of making money."

"Oh, the birds do not understand. As soon

as they give up one fish, they go down for another and after they have worked all day they are taken off and fed."

But this explanation did not satisfy Ah Moy, who looked at him with such a perplexed expression that he said,

"You are not accustomed to the ways of the world, little one."

"No," replied Ah Moy, "I am accustomed only to the ways of my father."

But this small sally changed into a smile as she saw one of the cormorants break his chain and fly, with a wild scream, to a beetling crag.

Two days more and the boat anchored at the foot of a flight of long stone steps which led up to the Azure Pagoda where the one hundred and eight fires were lighted for the purpose of burning out the one hundred and eight foolish desires which afflict the children of men. As Quong Lung's cook felt the need of prostrating

himself before the idols and leaving a small offering, the boat came to a standstill. What the one hundred and eight foolish desires were, of which he wished to purge himself, was not very apparent since his clothing consisted only of a pair of trousers and his food of fish and rice. Yet he religiously placed a copper coin in his ear and waded through the mud to the lion guarded steps.

All the way up were pretty, patient mothers, carrying their babes to be purged of foolish desires; but as the cook approached the sacred landing an outstander informed him that none were permitted to enter without proper clothing. Nothing daunted the religious cook returned to the boat and happily was able to borrow the foreman's hat and shirt, and thus equipped entered the chamber of prayer. After prostrating himself three times before an image and making all the genuflections required by

etiquette, he repaired to the Hall of Abstinence and thence to the shrine of the God of the Aching Tooth; not that he had toothache, but since he was there, he would appease the God lest He send that painful malady upon him. (It is said that in one of the incarnations of this God he suffered so much with the toothache that he tore off his jaw and since that time has had power over the ailment.)

It was before this idol without a jaw that the pious cook met some other boatmen, who invited him to a game of fan-tan behind the temple. The game was followed by the black smoke and in the wee small hours of the night, the cook found himself so much in debt that he was obliged to pawn the foreman's shirt and hat and return to the boat with only his trousers. This arrangement was not satisfactory, either to the foreman or to Quong Lung, so the latter gave the cook a beating,

after which he resumed his work in the spirit of a man who has enjoyed a holiday.

Among the boats that came to a standstill before the temple was one in no wise like the ordinary Chinese river boat. Its little deck was brightened by an Oriental rug; its woodwork was newly painted; and from its mast there floated a clean white flag upon which was sewn a cross in contrasting color. An awning gave the floor a look of cool comfort while, sitting idly beneath it, in an easy chair, was a young man of about twenty-five years. His figure was slightly bent and his face pale, but his bearing indicated resolve and achievement beyond the common.

This was Henry Ashman, a young missionary, who could not remember the time when he had not looked forward to the ministry as his life work. His father, the Reverend Henry Ashman, had requested on his death bed, that

his son should follow in his footsteps and help to carry on the great work of spreading the gospel. Believing it to be a sacred duty his mother had kept an eye single to this one object and had sent her son to a theological school, where he came duly into full membership with an orthodox church and kept the idea constantly before him that his father's mantle had fallen upon his shoulders.

Some of his experiences in college had done much to convince him that there were two sides to the great story; but he kept bravely on, strong in the faith that he was divinely appointed to spread the gospel. Notwithstanding this noble determination, he had occasionally been drawn into indiscretion. The story is easily told. There was a fascination about women which he could not resist. At one time he had fallen madly in love with an actress, whose rounded figure carried with it the soft

cooing of a dove. Each evening found him at the theater, painfully anxious about her and ready to commit any folly that the witchery of the hour might suggest. For a time he reveled in his passion, but when, instead of re-opening her engagement, the lady suddenly left the city, he analyzed the shocks that had gone through him and concluded that he had been under the influence of Satan. No good angel came to him at this critical moment to teach him how to gain a victory over his passion or to help him transmute it into good. Neither parent nor priest gave him any idea of the sacredness of the force that had swayed him; so in his blindness he called it evil and knelt down to the God of his fathers in prayer for strength to overcome it. The answer to his petition was pathetically inadequate; but he went on with his studies another year and then entered upon his mission.

Spring found him in Shanghai fully persuaded that he was serving God aright. Here there were no actresses to tempt him, but the old symptoms returned. Olive skinned nymphs, with repose and patience written in their faces, haunted him. He went through a period of mental conflict and in the end concluded that two spirits, which must adjust themselves as best they could, dwelt within him. In one of his escapades he had visited the slave market of Quong Lung with the result that a virtuous little slave girl had become his property. So when the two house boats ran their noses together before the one hundred and eight fires, the men recognized each other and renewed an acquaintance which was not altogether pleasing to Mr. Ashman.

Both boats being headed for Shanghai, it chanced from day to day that the men exchanged visits and held such conversation as

circumstances made incumbent upon them. Occasionally Ah Moy's timid eyes saw the steel gray ones of the foreigner turned upon her, which caused her to scurry under cover like a frightened hare. Not so, however, with Wing. She had, away back in the secret chambers of her heart, the desire to see and be seen and she invited stolen glances from Henry Ashman as naturally as a bird plumes for its mate.

During all these days of rowing and floating Quong Lung had fed his girls well and they were greatly improved in looks. There was a gem like brightness in the eyes of Ah Moy and warm red blood in her lips. The thought that she had saved her father's family from starvation gave her a consciousness that shone in her face and lightened her step. Many a day she pictured the old home with the Rain God pouring water upon its parched fields and the lamps again lighted upon the ancestral shrine.

She was glad she had been patient enough to listen to all of Wing's visionary conversation and she looked with pride upon the tell-tale hair which she had trained to lie in neat coils at the side of her head. Wing had passed through occasional fits of the blues when she sat sulkily twisting her fingers and swinging her feet; but even so she had greatly improved under the kindly influence of Ah Moy.

The boats of Quong Lung and Henry Ashman kept near together for days at a time and were now blockaded in the wilderness of small craft that swarms in the suburbs of Shanghai. As soon as they could work their way through, the little party would again set their feet upon the soil. The foreman swore and the crew drove the nose of Quong Lung's boat into the smallest opening, yet it was two days before they pulled up and, amid the clatter and roar of an open port, landed the girls upon the wharf.

A sheet of warm mist hung over Shanghai, protecting the foliage from the burning sun and making the gardens along the Bund glisten as though newly varnished. Foreigners from many countries were rushing through the streets and Ah Moy thought that she had never seen such hurry and confusion. As compared with the repose of her father's home all these strangers seemed like madmen. Crews from the warships, clad in spotless uniforms, brushed past her and rikisha men wrangled about their fees.

"What has happened," said Ah Moy to Wing, "that all the people seem so excited?"

"I am trying to think," replied Wing, "it seems to me like a far-off dream, but I can just remember what my mother used to say about the foreigners always being in a hurry. Repose is unknown to them."

"But they look so angry," said Ah Moy, "do they not try to 'keep the face'?"

"No," replied Wing, "it seems like very long ago, but I think that part of me which is American belongs to this mad rush. Somehow I feel used to it already."

"And what are those red-turbaned men who walk up and down and carry knives and guns," asked Ah Moy of Quong Lung.

"Oh, those are Sikhs. They do police duty; they are the men who capture young girls when they attempt to run away," explained he shrewdly.

"But even they are not so dreadful as the people with white faces and blue eyes,—so cold, oh so cold!" said Ah Moy.

But the white skin and the blue eyes were coming back to Wing's memory. As they passed along she looked into every man's face inquiringly as if to say, "Art thou not my noble father? I remember him as through a glass darkly and methinks he was the same manner of man as thou art."

CHAPTER X.

"Happiness and misery come by our own invitation. To act benevolently and assist those who are in danger is far better than to get up idol festivals."—*Confucian Tract.*

Quong Lung did not give the girls much time to look about; but hurried them into rikisha and had them transported to a large building on the Nanking road. There he put them in charge of an old woman named Wang who looked them over with a critical eye and said, in no uncertain tone:

"This is the time you have been cheated. Look at the feet of that girl," pointing to Ah Moy, "they are too small for a slave. Do you expect me to offer her my shoulder every time she tries to move?"

"Oh," responded Quong Lung, "do not be

cross, Wang. I will manage it. There are more ways than one to make money out of girls."

"And why did you buy the Eurasian," continued Wang, without heeding the answer, "you promised me that you would not buy any more half-breeds. The Chinamen will not have them for wives and there is always danger of trouble if you sell them to the flower boats. Now, what would happen if that girl's father should claim her?"

"Why," exclaimed Quong Lung, "it would probably happen that I should get some money. I have a plan—"

But here he stopped short and left Wang to surmise as best she could what the plan might be. Wang looked again at the pitiful figure of Wing and said:

"That kind are always getting sick. Do you suppose I have nothing to do but take care of sick Eurasians?"

However Wang might grumble she had no alternative but to obey, so she took the girls into a large room, the windows of which were barred with iron rods and the doors of which swung on huge wooden hinges. Flaky white-wash had once covered the walls but it was now relieved by streaks of dirt where the rain had run down. Through a grease-rimmed hole in the partition was a strip of cow-hide on the other end of which was a large fan, that hung directly over old Wang's bed, the ultimate object of this arrangement being that on occasions of heat and mosquitos the girls could keep the fan in motion. From the ceiling dangled women's clothing in all stages of wear and tear; the blue cotton of the coolie, the butterfly embroidered silk of the dancing girl and the shiny black of the middle class wife, hung side by side.

Through the grated window the Yang-tse-

Kiang river, with the lowest water that had been known for ages, shimmered in the distance. Ah Moy's quick eye cast a glance at the thread of silver winding toward the sea; but Wing saw only the people in the street below.

"Oh," said she, "if I could only get down and go with all those people!"

"But where would you go?" asked Ah Moy.

"Oh, just go. I feel a spirit within me that says 'go'."

A pained expression crept into Ah Moy's face but she made no reply. She had so often observed the great gulf between Wing's thought and her own that she had ceased to wonder at it and felt only sorrow.

In a short time old Wang came in and very unceremoniously set both girls to work.

"Can you wind silk from the cocoons," asked she, "it requires close attention for I do not wish any of it spoiled."

So saying she set down a basket filled with the dainty webs of the domestic silk worm. Although the reels were old and gummy, the girls worked patiently for several hours before their task-mistress again appeared. When she came and saw how well they had done she was quite repentant of the cross reception she had given them and said:

"You may have some food now, and after eating you may select articles from the rafters and wear them. If they need mending, I presume you know how to do it."

The girls ate their rice and mushrooms and then pulled down such garments as they desired and tried them on. With a little repairing they soon transformed themselves into tidy looking young women.

When Wang came back she found them again at work and showing such gentle obedience that her austere manner changed to one

of kindness. As the days passed Ah Moy won her way very near to the heart of the old woman, for she not only did her own work but frequently repaired the damage done by Wing's haste and impatience; so it came to pass that by the end of the first week, the three women had adjusted themselves to one another in quite a home-like way.

Quong Lung had not been to see them during all this time.

"They are in safe hands," he said to a friend, "old Wang has had many years' experience with girls. If the drouth continues, I think I shall go back to Honan for I can get girls at any price. The two, if kept at work, will earn their rice, while I collect another cargo."

"But can you sell them, if the times keep threatening? There is both drouth and war in the air," replied his friend. Quong Lung, however, paid little attention to war rumors.

"It is an old story," he said, "it is always threatening. And as for the drouth, it is my best friend."

Soon after this, however, there was blackness in the sky and the wind bellowed down the Nanking road; the gutters sent up noisome odors and forked lightning darted through the clouds. Quong Lung scented the storm and went out upon the street, only to see the sky shut down and the water falling in sheets upon the dry earth.

"I must look after my girls. This rain shapes my affairs in quite a new way," he thought. "No more can I buy the daughters of the literati at my own price and no more will I visit the province of Honan."

He tied his trousers around his ankles, let out his queue which had been tucked into his blouse pocket and turned his face toward the place where the slave girls were confined.

Old Wang knew how many tinkles of the bell meant Quong Lung and she descended the stairs in haste to let him in. She reported that the girls were well and in suitable condition to sell.

"At your command, I will prepare them for the market," she said.

Quong Lung knew what she meant and took from his pouch a gold piece with which to buy hair pins and bracelets and such other adornments as add to the attractions of womankind.

"Have them ready tomorrow," he directed, "I will bring some one to see them by ten o'clock."

Thus commanded Wang began her preparations. She shaved their foreheads and combed their hair, plastering down with mucilage such tresses as showed signs of being unruly; she touched their eyebrows with black, turning them deftly to the shape of the willow leaf;

and their lips she brightened with vermilion. She pressed folds into their trousers with as much precision as a tailor presses the garments of men. All the morning Wang fretted and fumed over the girls and when her labors were ended they looked very different from the timid little country maids whom Quong Lung had bought.

When he rang the bell, a number of would-be purchasers followed at his heels. Most of them were Chinamen in search of wives, but a few were foreigners in search of pleasure. Among the former Ah Moy was a prime favorite, but Quong Lung held his prize at a high figure.

"You cannot buy the daughter of a Ching Fo every day," he would say. One merchant offered five hundred dollars for her; but the slave dealer scorned the amount.

"I can sell her in San Francisco for two thousand dollars," he declared and to others he

replied, "No, no; I can do much better in San Francisco."

As for Wing, no one seemed to want her at any price. At every foreigner, she looked with strange, inquiring eyes, as though she thought he might be her father and when she was left alone with Ah Moy, for a few moments, she whispered:

"Do you think I could tell my father, if I saw him?"

Two weeks passed in a fruitless attempt to sell the girls when, one morning, Henry Ashman, accompanied by another young American, whom he affectionately called "Frank", came up the stairs to look at the slave girls.

Ashman was pale and nervous, and in answer to Quong Lung's inquiry as to whether he wanted a girl, replied, "Yes."

"Then you take this one," and Quong Lung pointed to Wing, "the Chinese do not like half-breeds."

"She is probably the daughter of one of our own country-men," observed Frank, in an undertone. The remark cut Mr. Ashman as a knife cuts and he passed her by. Stepping over to where Ah Moy was standing, he patted her on the cheek, saying:

"What is the price of this little piece of bric-a-brac?"

No such liberty had ever been taken with the daughter of Ching Fo before and it brought into her face an expression of defiance beyond belief. She felt the meaning of the steel gray eyes as they looked down upon her and an appalling desire for vengence filled her heart. Notwithstanding her amazing self control, there came upon her such a surging of angry passions as she had never before experienced. To obey she had always been accustomed; to forgive an injury was in accordance with the

teaching of her gentle Buddha; but this was an offense that moved her to burning hate. She held Quong Lung responsible, because into his hands her father had given her. She thought of the parting scene at the monastery and of her father's anguish when he told her of his inability to get the clause to protect her from dishonor. And, more than all, she thought of the knife that she still carried in her sleeve.

Quong Lung had been kind to her and she loved him, but he could hold her in the hollow of his hand only so long as he respected her ancient traditions. At a glance the slave dealer saw that he had to reckon with the old aristocratic spirit of China, and he adroitly led Mr. Ashman aside and said to him:

"She has only recently been taken from her parents and she may be difficult to manage."

The missionary turned deathly pale. He took the arm of his friend and pushed him

toward the stairs. When they had reached the street, he said:

"My God! Frank, what would my mother say if she knew what happened this morning? I belong to an honorable family and I am a Christian minister and yet this daughter of a heathen has a finer sense of honor than I. Tell me, oh tell me, why, I am cursed with appetites that are beyond my control."

"Your case is not an exceptional one," replied his friend, "as all the open ports of Asia testify. It is a humiliating confession to make, but we, of the west, have much to learn from the Chinese. Go where you please and you find them master over their appetites. I know a priest who speaks good English and I often consult him about my physical body. If you wish, I will take you to him."

"A priest? A Buddhist priest?"

"Yes," answered Frank, "I have lived longer

in China than you have and I begin to understand that there is a great difference between their teaching and ours. And whether you believe it or not, I know that they regard us as brutes on the sex question. Shall we go to the priest?"

"Go anywhere," despondently replied Mr. Ashman, "I am willing to embrace either paganism or heathenism, if it will help me to shake off this vicious appetite which I so loathe."

The two young men walked a few blocks then turned into one of the crooked little byways which led to a temple. A toothless old priest admitted them and, after asking them to abstain from doing damage to the building, was about to leave when Frank deftly slipped a half dollar into his hand and asked if they might have an interview with Father Took Sing.

The old priest was surprised, for he had not expected Americans to ask for religious instruction. He led the way, however, to a side door and bade them enter. The little cell into which they passed contained a bronze image of the Buddha seated upon a lotus flower; a table, and a couple of chairs. The repose depicted in the face of the idol, the simplicity of its drapery and the bareness of the cell, was in such sharp contrast to the ostentation of the church to which the young minister had been accustomed, that he stood as one who unexpectedly finds himself upon holy ground.

For some moments both young men remained silently contemplating their surroundings, when a priest noiselessly entered and stood before them. His shaven head and yellow robe consorted with the place and seemed to add solemnity to it. Mr. Ashman addressed him in a voice which trembled with emotion. The

priest listened and sighed and clicked the beads of his wooden rosary and when the young man ceased speaking, he cast his eyes upon the floor in deep meditation. After a few moments he raised them and said:

"What is it, my son, that you ask of me? It is seldom that a Christian comes to me for advice."

"I would know your opinion about the disease called lust," bravely replied Mr. Ashman, "and I would know if you can prescribe for it."

The priest placed his left hand upon his forehead and with his right held fast to his beads. Every wrinkle in his old face spoke of sympathy and love. After a silence of some moments, he said:

"It is well that thou art here, for while the Orient has much to learn from the west, and while your Jesus was a great sage whom all

good men must reverence and love, still there is some wisdom for which you must come to the Far East."

So saying, he took from the drawer of the table a sheet of paper and a slab of India ink, and drew in softest lines, a serpent underneath a lotus flower.

"Few men can translate this picture," said he, "but it has in it all the heavens and all the hells of human life. To the Asiatic man the serpent has always stood for the knowledge which you seek; but in making it a symbol of evil your early Christians surrounded the passions with mystery and suspicion. Dozens of pages might be filled with quotations from our classical literature to show how ancient and how deep-rooted is the Chinaman's belief in the sanctity of the creative act. It is not so with your western people. He will be a benefactor to your race who shall inaugurate new ideas

concerning the fleshly appetites. And now, my son, it would be a poor adviser who should point out so confidently a disease and not be able to prescribe for it. So I tell thee in all fatherly love that your education concerning the passions has been neglected. They are not evil, as you think, they are valuable, even precious; but you must have more definite knowledge. Nature has condensed in them one of her most powerful forces, but unless great care be used to conserve and transmute it into good, it will scatter and pour uncleanness through the body. The exercises for transmutation are simple and no man need be discouraged. They consist in proper thinking and proper breathing. Keep the mind away from the ordinary imagining, and hold as long as possible an image of virtue and abstemiousness. Stand erect with head well up. Remember this, for no man thinks his best thoughts while his head is bent forward.

Then fill the lungs and the spinal cord as much as possible with breath. When once this habit is established and the mental vision can be kept, you will be conscious that the force is passing upward and stimulating the brain. These exercises may be taken at any time but when you feel the desire strongly, it is most easily transmuted. If you lose your mental image do not be disappointed but renew it with determination to be master over it.

"The mere calm demand of the will may do something, yet it is not so effective as the subtle force produced by rhythmic breathing and the thought of virtue. The lotus flower I have drawn for you is a symbol of this purity of thought, and the serpent represents the wisdom that accompanies it. Lust is a monster that comes forth in the darkness and the superior man will fortify himself at that time, and neither eat nor sit nor stand sensually. Even

the arms and legs of a virtuous man know how to arrange themselves.

"When once you begin to train your mind, your own judgment will dictate what to do and soon new laws will set themselves up for your perfect redemption. 'Happy the man who hath due place assigned to all the beasts that roar within the carnal mind.' "

There was a long silence in the little room before the young men arose and passed out into the street. Ashman was much agitated and said:

"If all this be true, we Christians should have been teaching it ages ago. I fear that to all our sins of commission must be added this great one of omission."

Pondering over the priest's advice they walked to their respective homes neither feeling any desire to return to the building where the slave girls were kept.

Other would-be purchasers left Quong Lung and he saw the day go by without effecting a sale.

"I am out of luck," he said to old Wang as he was closing the house for the day, "and I believe I shall shape my affairs so as to make the trip to San Francisco."

"I told you so," replied old Wang with true womanly instinct, "Ah Moy's feet are too small and Wing is only a consumer of rice. She will never bring the money you have invested in her, beside she is not in good health, and may at any time become a burden."

"Well, then," said Quong Lung, "I may as well give it up. I can get something for her at the flower boats, and then I can take Ah Moy to San Francisco and do well on her. But when I bought the half-breed I had a plan and if it had worked as I expected, all would have been well."

"You have hinted at your plan before," said Wang, a little piqued; "and I suppose I know what it is."

"I suppose you do," acknowledged he, "you are shrewd enough to see that if I could find her father, I could make him pay well for her. But as I have failed in that, I think I will let her go for what I can get and trust to better luck next time."

The next morning Wang dressed Wing in the best the place afforded and sat her down to await the arrival of Quong Lung. Adorned with jewelry and fine clothes, the perfume of sandal wood in her hair and her fine olive skin set off with cheeks and lips of vermilion, she suited fairly well the requirements of the flower boat. The only slip from virtue that hampered the poor child was the slip that her father had bestowed upon her before she was born. and this fact gave Quong Lung a reason-

able hope of selling her; but he still regretted that he had missed finding her father, the white devil, who had come to China to get rich and left without giving him an opportunity to extort a share of that wealth. However, Quong Lung was not a man to cry over spilt milk. He came promptly to the house in the Nanking road, and, in a savage way, gave the three tinkles to the bell which brought old Wang to the door in double quick time.

"Is she ready," asked he.

"Yes, she is ready and she looks very pretty," replied Wang soothingly, for she saw that he was in bad humor. Quong Lung took the half-breed girl by the hand and led her down the steps. She flung back a parting word to Ah Moy and seemed pleased that new scenes awaited her. No knowledge had she of the brief, bitter life of the brothel nor of the cruel hardships endured by those who lived there.

"A fragile child, from a home unblessed,
To be culled and worn on a sated breast,"

was poor little Wing, as she said goodbye to Ah Moy, and followed Quong Lung like a lamb to the slaughter.

"Come this way," commanded he, "and try to behave like Ah Moy, or I shall not be able to sell you at all."

Just as he was about seating her in a rikisha a policeman tapped him on the shoulder and said, in very good English:

"A man awaits you at the guild house, sir."

Quong Lung's face brightened. He felt that this might be the message for which he had waited in vain since his arrival in Shanghai; the message that would tell him the whereabouts of the American who was the father of his slave.

He sent the girl back up stairs and made haste to a building which was situated in an

unsavory part of the city, known as the Foo Chow road. From the outside nothing indicated what might be within; but the smells were those of Chinatown and the guard at the door was of the Ho Wang company.

As Quong Lung entered, two men arose and bowed diplomatically low. Quong Lung shook his own hands and motioned them to a table; tea, tobacco and Sam Shu came in courses; but at last the tallest of the two men said:

"Most honored friend we have secured the information you desired concerning the father of the eurasian girl and we would know how much you are willing to pay us for our trouble."

"Is the testimony correct beyond the peradventure of a doubt?" inquired Quong Lung.

"It is a transcript from the temple records," replied the first speaker, "I swear it will put you into communication with the father of the girl."

"I would pay something down, and more—if the matter comes to a successful issue," ventured Quong Lung guardedly.

"The labor has been great," urged the man, "we have searched over half the records in the province. We must have, at least, three hundred dollars."

Quong Lung rattled some coin in his pocket but beyond that made no reply. After a short time, the two men arose to go and Quong Lung, seeing that they intended no more parley, said:

"Come back tomorrow and I will see what can be done. The price is too high; but I will consider it."

Quong Lung had already exhausted his own ingenuity in search of evidence that would enable him to find the man who had bought Wing's mother and so cruelly deserted her and he had been compelled to resort to the professional detective. These men he knew to be

merciless in their demands for money, but they were his only hope and the delay of twenty-four hours was but a strategic move that he might ascertain from old Wang a little more definitely the condition of Wing's health.

He walked back to the Nanking road and again rang the bell. Old Wang was in a communicative humor and he had, on such occasions, no hesitancy in telling her the truth about his plans.

"I am in a way," said he, "to find the whereabouts of Wing's father and to get the information I wanted as to his finances. But I wish your opinion as to the state of her health; for it will not pay to expend any more money on her if she is not in tolerable condition. In other words, if she is likely to go to the white man's hell before I can get my hands on the father, I want to know it."

"Oh, no fear of that. I have been in the

business for twenty years and I should say, barring accidents, she would outlive Ah Moy. The foreigner's children do hold on to life unaccountably," she reassured him.

"Then," said Quong Lung, "you shall keep Wing for the present and say to anyone who calls that she is already sold. Help me now, Wang, and when I get a hold on that fellow, we will both have more money than we have now. Goodbye."

Next morning the trio met again at the guild hall and Quong Lung dispensed tea with a bountiful hand but the two detectives reiterated their price of three hundred dollars for the information.

"It is exorbitant," protested the slave dealer.

"But it is proportionate to the good; the spawn of the white devil is valuable when all the signs come right," urged the tall one.

An end to the parley came, however, and

Quong Lung paid the three hundred dollars for a piece of paper upon which was written:

"Ukiah Grant, dealer in Wines and Liquors, North Honan road, purchased one slave girl named Wo Sing, in 1885. In 1892 he retired from business and returned to his native city of San Francisco, California, U. S. A. The records show that he paid taxes upon one hundred thousand dollars. Signed by Wu Chow, Recorder of the Kwan Yin temple."

A great cloud was lifted from Quong Lung, when he saw the official stamp of the Kwan Yin temple, for he knew that this was testimony no man could dispute. With the document still in his hand, he returned to the Nanking road and told old Wang of his success.

"You may begin now to put both the girls in training for a trip to San Francisco. Ah Moy must be taught to say that she is the daughter of Quong Lung, and born in the United

States; otherwise the devil will be to pay when I try to land her. It is the old story of the custom house. You must also produce a mole on her right cheek. Aside from that she fits the passport that I have very well. The half-breed, I am sure, is all right, as I can prove that she is the daughter of a wealthy citizen of that virtuous community."

So saying, he dropped another coin in the hand of Wang and went out. There was buoyancy in his step as he walked briskly toward the Bund. The amount of money that he might extort from Ukiah Grant when he landed in San Francisco with his half-breed daughter was as yet an unknown quantity; but he felt sure that it would swell his bank account.

It would be a week yet, before another steamer sailed and by that time he hoped to have everything ready. From the Nanking road he went directly to the office of the Nippon

Yusem Kashia, where he commanded respectful attention, for he was a good customer and made the trip often.

CHAPTER XI.

"He abused me, he cheated me, he slandered me. To those who harbor such thoughts, hatred will never cease, for hatred does not cease by hatred, but by love."

—*Buddhist Tract.*

Poor old China was daily growing more bitter against the foreigners. Men gathered on the streets to discuss the situation, but never seemed able to decide what lay at the bottom of the trouble. Both noble and ignoble, however, ran a thread of hatred for Christianity through all their talk. The injunction of the missionaries that a man should leave father and mother and follow Christ, always brought forth violent condemnation. The fact that the missionaries preceded the tradesman, was another matter of much comment, for it was the western tradesman whom they did not wish to encourage.

Everywhere was unspeakable confusion; the leisure class, with bitterness in every eye; the poor coolie filled with suspicion and fear. From day to day these mutterings continued until they finally broke into a storm that shook the coast from Peking to Canton.

Especially in the north was the news in the nature of "wrath laid up against the day of wrath". Hatred against the foreigners broke out in mobs and riots and the result was that the Righteous Defenders again issued a special edict in the name of the God of Happiness. The document was first found posted upon the wall of a protestant church at Kading, and was translated into English for the North China Daily News, as follows:

"The fifth day of the fifth moon has been chosen for the suppression of the Christian religion; the burning of all church property; the massacre of all missionaries and converted

Chinese. We know there are many pawn shops attached to these establishments where there are vestments and jewels. We will take them all for the payment of our soldiers. After that we will sweep away the public halls and all that is not for the good of our own people. We have suffered so much that now it is time to avenge ourselves. We have one hundred thousand divinely appointed soldiers who will leave nothing undone that will help the people toward prosperity. Signed by the ancient order of patriots and Righteous Defenders."

(The above is a correct copy of the Boxer proclamation, as translated for the North China News.)

As soon as it became known that a massacre was to be inaugurated, pandemonium broke loose. Business was suspended and every man gathered such weapons for self-defense as he could lay his hands upon. A faithful few

bombarded the heavens with prayer; but the great majority put their trust in munitions of war; while both saint and sinner kept one eye steadily on the steamship offices for the earliest possible opportunity to secure passage to a place of safety. On the wharves the carters swore, by the five-toed dragon, that the accumulation of truck was overtopping the offices, while at the tourist hotel, situated on the water front, the foreigners established headquarters, with the possibility in view that it might be expedient to jump into the sea.

This condition of affairs had been going on for a week, when the panic-stricken from the interior began to arrive. It now seemed as though China were vomiting her entire foreign population into this one port. Sunburnt, bedraggled and hungry, they came in herds like deer before a forest fire. Every moment the commodities of life were becoming more diffi-

cult to procure and every moment the crowd increased. An incredible number of children all with voices and with digestive organs, added to this general tumult. Side by side with the throngs of missionaries were foreigners of every conceivable type,—Jews, who had been driven out of Russia by the persecutions there; saloon men who had flocked over to China under the protection of the "open door"; agents for every portable article that England, Germany, or France, had to sell, and last, but not least, hordes of Chinamen fleeing from their own country to find protection under a foreign flag.

The Bund was a scene that beggars description; blocking the way was every conceivable object that man could carry off, beds, coffins, clocks, bundles of silk and occasionally, lying prone across the path, a Chinaman lost in the delights of the opium smoke. Light up

this scene with the lurid passions that are inherent in the heart of man and you have the Shanghai in which Quong Lung found himself on the first of July.

Into this bedlam he came, complacently leading his two slave girls. Tucked away under his blouse were three European steerage tickets, the transcript of the temple record, for which he had paid three hundred dollars, and two passports, one for Ah Moy and one for himself. He did not think it necessary to have a passport for Wing, since he could prove that she was the daughter of an American citizen.

His own passport recited that he was a merchant doing business on Jackson street, the kind of business it was not necessary to relate. He was familiar with the exclusion act and so drew a hair line on its wording. The passport on which he expected to land Ah Moy stated that she was Chinese, twenty years old, and

born in California. This document he had used before and it had worked well—so well that he was greeted with smiles at the Hong Kong American bank on Kearney street, and so well that his reputation for building joss houses was the envy of his less prosperous neighbors. His plan of getting passports for girls was an invention of his own, by which he cut off the middlemen and saved all the profits for himself. It consisted in taking a death stricken slave from a brothel on Dupont street, every time he went from San Francisco to Shanghai and so arranging it that she did not wish to return. This was easy to do for the law of China gives the lives of females into the hands of the master, and the steerage across was only twenty-five dollars. He kept a good lawyer in San Francisco and paid him liberally for information concerning the whys and wherefores of such conduct.

Ah Moy answered the description in her second-hand passport reasonably well. That she was Chinese any one could see; that she was twenty years of age, happily no one could deny, and that she had a mole on the right cheek was due to old Wang's skillful manipulation. The document upon which he expected to land Wing was signed, sealed and delivered by the recorder of the Kwan Yin temple. Taking all things together, Quong Lung congratulated himself upon his good luck.

Stepping out of the chaos into which his own country had fallen and landing on his feet in San Francisco was a most desirable achievement, and he walked up the gang plank of the Hong Kong Maru with the air of the "man who is".

On board the ship was a mass of humanity to stir the hardest heart. The liberal treatment of the missionary boards in paying bounties on

all babies born in China of missionary parents, had brought forth fruit, as was evinced by the numerous children. Having had Chinese nurses all their lives, some of them protested against the new order of things in language ungrammatical, but decisive and forcible. Other episodes there were to wring the heart; dark faces in which revenge was depicted and pale ones full of sorrow; weepings and the pathetic clinging of hands; a millenium of holiness in some and of hate in others. The commingling of races so characteristic of the open ports of Asia was forcibly illustrated; Eurasians in all shades and proportions of Asiatic, mixed with western blood; Hindoos, Arabs, Sikhs, Russians, all and all loading the ship down to the gunwale.

In the European steerage there was scarcely standing room, but Quong Lung pushed his way to the women's cabin and there deposited

the two astonished girls, bidding them stay there until he returned. He then climbed the narrow iron stairs to the middle deck and began searching among the crew for old acquaintances. As he stepped under the awning, he saw a number of women standing beside the rail, each of whom held a hymn book in her hand and a look of doomsday in her face. With his eyes cast deep upon the floor, he attempted to pass this little group; but one of them plucked him by the sleeve and asked him if he "loved Jesus", to which he replied that he did, but his face darkened and he dove into the second cabin kitchen where he discussed the missionary question with the cook. When he saw an opportunity to pass unnoticed he walked hurriedly toward the hatch, where the great steel arm of the crane was swinging load after load of baggage into the hold.

There he unexpectedly encountered the eyes

of Henry Ashman. The two greeted each other as men of the world usually do and passed on to their respective places, but Quong Lung's quick eye noted a change in the face of the missionary that betokened a new man. So plainly did he carry the evidence of regeneration that the slave-dealer involuntarily assumed an attitude of respect toward him and, for a brief moment, contrasted the mockeries of his own life with the virtues of more scrupulous men and was a little cleansed from having come in contact with cleanliness.

It was now four o'clock and the ship was nearing the start. The missionaries gathered on the deck and sang, "The heathen in his blindness", and said prayers for all who were not of their own faith. The noise increased, the jar of machinery shook the ship and Quong Lung slipped back to the steerage cabin to see that his girls were where he had left them.

He found the place filled with as many women as could find standing room and later events showed that no two of them spoke the same language, which fact gave Quong Lung great satisfaction, for he shrewdly reckoned that as long as the women could not talk together, his girls were not likely to be interfered with.

Soon afterward he went back to consult again with the cook and he swore, until his knowledge of English was exhausted, that he had never seen so many missionaries in his life.

"They talk too much and ask too many questions," he asserted, "and sometimes they set storms in motion that are hard to quell."

His opinion was based upon an experience through which he had passed in San Francisco when some of the women from the Mission had carried off one of his girls.

"They dignify it by the name of 'rescue work,' but it is nothing more than kidnapping," he declared.

Naturally, he hoped that none of the women in the cabin where his girls were to be confined for twenty-seven days, were in any way connected with this class—a hope that was somewhat strengthened by the confusion of tongues.

The cook quite agreed with him. He had attended a mission school, but only for the purpose of learning English.

"My no can chin chin," he said, as they drank and pledged eternal friendship and swore that China was for the Chinese.

CHAPTER XII.

"Some say the nature of one man is good and the nature of another is bad, but I say the nature of all men is good."—*Confucius.*

The first three days of the voyage were like the first three days of any other sea voyage, the passengers, shivering and at times turning grayish yellow, sat irresolutely about the deck. When the stewardess came around with the regulation questions, those who could, smiled and others demanded beef tea. Qoung Lung was too good a sailor to get sick; he loafed and picked dainties from the kettles of the cook and frequently passed the door of the women's cabin but never ventured within.

By the third day everything grew rapidly better. First one and then another was able to go on deck. And at last, the two girls crawled

out of their bunks, combed their hair and, under the protection of one of the women, climbed the stairs to get the morning air. Quong Lung saw them and gritted his teeth.

"By the five-toed dragon," he muttered, "there is a Salvation Army bonnet and a hymn book with my two girls."

He glanced into the innocent blue eyes of the woman as though she had done him an injury and as soon as he could conveniently lay hold upon the girls, he took them by the hand and led them to the stairs, saying in no uncertain voice:

"Stay below and keep away from the women."

This act brought upon him a score or two of eyes and set a score or two of tongues agoing.

"I was trying to help the poor girls," complained she of the bonnet, "and the horrid old Chinaman took them away."

"You must not be discouraged in well-doing," said a sweet-faced sister, "sometimes it is many days before bread cast upon the water returns."

"But where can he be going with those two girls, and can he be their father, or are they slaves?" were questions that were discussed and which led to results greater than any of them could foresee.

Society finds its own on ship board as well as otherwhere and it came about naturally that missionaries of all creeds drifted together. Each morning they held a prayer meeting, after which they indulged in social talk—no better, no worse, than that of others. They managed to gather all the available news, to speculate upon it and to draw conclusions, sometimes correct and sometimes not. They knew who favored missionary work and who opposed it, and they scented from afar off any

who were tainted with unbelief. Henry Ashman was frequently with them; but he was naturally a silent man, and now began to feel out of place in their society. His interview with the old priest had shaken out of him his prejudice against other religions and caused him to pause and wonder whether the eastern peoples had not been nourished upon some sort of spiritual food, as yet unknown to the Christian. He recalled that the old priest had spoken of Jesus with love and reverence. In a measure this had disarmed him so that he felt no inclination to take part in the conversation of his co-workers.

Thus matters stood until one morning an elderly man who was affectionately called "Brother Jones", led the prayer-meeting. Brother Jones had a cough and an increasing family, and had dabbled a little in profitable trade. He reconciled himself to such acts as

less pious people call custom house evasions on the ground that a right application of the proceeds sanctified what in other men would be sin. In his prayer he informed the All-wise One that the good work would go right on in China, despite the Boxers, and expressed the opinion that the Christian religion was suited to all times and to all places.

Soon after he had finished speaking, Quong Lung, leading the two slave girls, passed by and Brother Jones addressed him in the dialect of the Quong Tung province. It was a surprise to Quong Lung to find a missionary who could speak the language of his own country, so he entered into a conversation with him, which ended in an invitation to leave the girls with one of the ladies.

The lady referred to was a Presbyterian missionary in whose face every line spoke of good. Ah Moy felt it and placed her defenseless little

hand in the proffered one and sat down by her side. Quong Lung was now so hedged in that he felt bound to make an explanation, so he boldly said that Ah Moy was his daughter and born in California. He knew very well that without some plausible story, the question would naturally arise as to how he expected to land in San Francisco with the two girls.

But it was an unlucky moment when he condescended to explain matters to Brother Jones, for that gentleman had lived many years in China and recognized in the face of Quong Lung that unmistakeable something which stamps itself upon a Cantonese Chinaman, while in Ah Moy's face he saw as plainly the marks of the northern bred. This discrepancy of testimony, at once gave rise to the suspicion that both girls were slaves. Brother Jones communicated his idea to the women as soon as the Chinaman was beyond hearing and

from that moment the horoscope of the slave dealer told a troublesome story.

It was useless now to try to escape the missionaries; they swarmed about him and expressed great interest in the girls; they led them on deck and talked to them in that wonderful sign language which nature provides for all her children; when the weather was fair, they leaned together over the rails, to see the water churned into frothy yeast, or peeped into the engine room where each throb of the bright machinery was bringing them nearer to their destination.

Among those who walked and talked with the girls was Dr. Kate Richardson, who had been stationed, as a medical missionary, in one of the open ports of China. Her eye was the trained eye of science and she knew at once that into Wing's veins had been poured a stream of fierce and ungoverned passion.

"Poor little waif," she said, "cast upon so stormy a sea without sail or rudder; it is to such as these that the true missionary should go."

"Yes, yes," said she of the motherly heart, "but can you tell us how to help these unfortunates? It is easy to bring Ah Moy to Jesus; but with the Eurasian, it is quite a different question."

"Ah Moy," said the doctor a little sharply, "is no more in need of Jesus than are the birds. It is Wing that needs our help. By her father's blood she is fairly stamped as one with us. Over her floats the banner and pennant of the Aryan race,—the race par excellence, the race that advances and still advances; but alas, the race with the most ungoverned passions. I do not mean by this that Wing is bad, or destined to become bad. But if left to herself, she will naturally find her way to the class whom we

are wont to call 'fallen'. This child," continued the doctor, putting her arm about Wing, "is of value to the world only as she is protected. I think it was Homer who said that a boy had better be unborn than untaught and this is equally true of girls."

"Well, doctor, you have diagnosed the case, now can you prescribe for it," asked one of the ladies.

"Yes," replied the doctor, "if I had authority over her I should teach her to control her physical impulses and above all I should teach her the meaning of those emotions and imaginings that so sway her. Daughters of immoral men are great sufferers, for they are constantly driven by unseen hands into vices that sap the brain and weaken the body. But I insist that all this can be overcome and that to help them do so is a service of love which we owe humanity."

Henry Ashman had now joined the group and was listening to the words of the doctor with great interest. Not since his visit to the old priest in the temple had he felt so stirred, and when the doctor added,

"Buddhism has done more than Christianity to teach her children sex-wisdom," he could not abstain from expressing his hearty approval. In his heart he felt that the old priest was the savior who had re-shaped his life and he was glad to learn that others were interested in the same line of thought.

The Salvation Army missionary, however, not comprehending the thread of the argument, protested, saying that missionaries who could endorse anything in Buddhism were in danger of losing the true light.

"That subject is not under discussion," replied the doctor, "but it is a fact beyond dispute that Chinese children are trained in the

great duty of self-control. If our own people understood this subject better, we should not find half-breed children scattered from Dan to Beersheba and left without protection, as this poor child has been."

Wing felt the magnetism of the doctor's embrace and crept nearer to her with a sheltered feeling such as she had never experienced before.

"This strange foreign woman," she said to Ah Moy when they were again alone, "understands me and I love her."

During these long morning talks of the missionaries, Quong Lung walked the deck and kept near the girls; but he had now ceased to interfere. To counteract this influence, however, he looked after their bodily comforts with all the consideration which a man gives to good horses. When he found that the foreign food was distateful, he made raids upon the com-

missary department for such things as the Oriental palate craves. These dainties he cooked himself upon a pocket stove and dished them out as the girls had need. Through all his conversation he was careful to impress Ah Moy with the idea that California was a country where people lived and luxuriated, and that as soon as they arrived, she would become the wife of a rich merchant who had given him a commission for one.

The water remained a miracle of beauty; blue met blue on the horizon line for days at a time; occasionally a whale spouted in the distance or an albatross swept the air close to the rail, but save for these little incidents the solitude of an unbroken sea contrasted, day by day, with the restlessness of the passengers on board the great ship. For eighteen days the scene was the same, when suddenly an outline of dim green and a long line of white surf crept along

the horizon. Quong Lung's quick eye was the first to see it; he called the attention of the girls and pointed to a jewel-like row of islands set in an ever-changing, opal sea. For hours they watched it grow into land, studded with groups of palms and fields of sugar cane, while little dots on its slopes told of homes nestling beneath the foliage.

This was the Eden they saw from a distance; but when the ship was tied up to the wharf, a very different story was revealed. Having joined the sisterhood of states, the Hawaiian Islands presented a practical illustration of what western civilization can do in a short time. Honolulu repoiced in a political "boss", a chain gang and a "Holiness Hotel." Quong Lung attempted to go ashore; but was informed by a policeman that Chinamen were not allowed on the wharf.

The missionaries, however, were on their

own stamping ground. They were met by an eager throng, escorted ashore and entertained with fruits and flowers beyond compare. On the third day they returned heavy-laden with all the luxuries of a semi-tropical climate. Out of their abundance Ah Moy and Wing were bountifully supplied, at which they marveled and were happy. That night, under the stars, a white trail was left on the smooth surface of the sea and in the morning the ship was again out of sight of land.

Only a week now remained before the end of the voyage; tailor-made suits, to adorn the women, came out of trunks; Japanese kimonas gave place to shirt waists; the male members of the missionary staff had their queues cut off and, in deference to western taste, donned coats and vests; the Japanese limped about in shoes and even Quong Lung brought out shining new trousers for his girls.

The ship underwent such a clearing up as no ship ever receives until she is nearing port. Tattered flags were mended and masts painted, floors scrubbed and brass polished. Through the liberality of the steamship company hundreds of labels bearing the word "Disinfected" were scattered among the passengers with the advice to "stick them onto everything." This both saint and sinner did and no health officer could suspect the presence of cholera or plague. The dreadful yellow flag, however, still held its place and when quarantine waters were reached, the ship halted like a human thing for the inspectors who very soon boarded her and proceeded to look for symptoms of plague. Well-worn thermometers were thrust into suspicious looking mouths, and eyelids turned back while doctors peered with critical exactness into their blooody depths. But the clean white labels and the fact that both sick and well declared

themselves "all right" carried the day, and toward night the yellow flag came down and the ship slid gracefully up to her pier at the foot of Brennan street.

Here she was again boarded by officials in blue uniforms who seemed to be merely loitering about, but who were in reality taking close notice of all on board. These men Quong Lung pointed out to the girls, at the same time handing them the documents upon which he expected to get them ashore, and once again impressed upon them the necessity of saying that they were born in California.

Although of a race whose greatest accomplishment is "to keep the face", Quong Lung showed signs of worry. The ship was now discharging her just and her unjust into the streets of San Francisco; the second cabin steward had gathered the Chinese into a squad and was waiting until the European passengers were

off, to marshal them in double quick time to the gang plank. In half an hour the human stream began to thin and Quong Lung turned to the girls and bade them be ready. As it was near night he shrewdly reckoned that the custom officers would be getting hungry and perhaps that fact might enhance his chances of passing without very close scrutiny. The minutes seemed long to him, but at last the steward gave the signal and the Chinese fell into line. Each as he passed presented his passport and answered such questions as were put to him. The officers recognized Quong Lung as a merchant whom they had often seen on board and let him pass without even looking at his papers. But when the girls stepped timidly behind him, that evil genius, Brother Jones, whispered something into the offiecr's ear, and he immediately motioned the girls back and the steward led them to one side.

After the crowd had disappeared the officers called the girls forward again and demanded their passports. The description in Ah Moy's seemed fairly correct but suspicion was aroused by the fact that the mole on her cheek was slightly off color. When they asked her where she was born she was too frightened to recall the word "California", which had been so carefully drilled into her memory and only stood with the stolid look of a Chinese who does not understand. The officer folded her passport and handed it back with a shake of the head, at the same time reaching for the transcript of the temple record which Wing held.

"Here is another case out of the ordinary," said he, "I do not think we have ever had a Chinese woman before who claimed to be the daughter of an American. It may be all right but I do not wish to take the responsibility."

After a short conversation the officers de-

cided that they could do nothing except keep the girls on board until another day and then give them a new hearing.

Quong Lung requested the privilege of going back to speak to them; but his request was denied and he walked wrathfully away toward Chinatown.

CHAPTER XIII.

"The duration of ill-gotten wealth is as snow on which hot water is poured. The possession of land, improperly obtained, endures as long as the sand heaped up by the waves."

—*Chinese Moral Maxim.*

Chinatown was all agog over Quong Lung's failure to land his girls. The president of the Ho Wang company sent out invitations to its business men to meet in the hall on Crocker alley and talk the matter over, while on the streets little knots of men hinted at conspiracy. The room where they were invited to meet was one in which the Chinese municipal council was wont to assemble, but on occasions like the present it was available for small parties of men who had important business to adjust. Its furniture consisted of straight-back teak

wood chairs, a long table upon which was tea and opium, tobacco and whiskey—even the whiskey of the foreign devil, which they liked better than Sam Shu. Against the wall divans with wooden pillows attested to the luxurious habits of those who gathered here. In an incense burner before the God of Prosperity a hundred joss sticks attested to the religious zeal of the visitors. At the far end of the room was a screen upon which was inscribed, in softly shaded ideographs, verses from the Confucian code.

This pious appearing decoration, however, served another purpose than that of teaching morality, for it was hung at the top with hinges that swung out and concealed an opening in the wall through which any number of persons might disappear and, like birds that swim under water, come to the surface a long way from the place where they went down. This

arrangement was necessary on account of the frequent visits of the police, on which occasions it was thought better that the hall should be found unoccupied.

At the street entrance was a sentinel who could communicate, by pulling a wire, with another sentinel on the inside,—once for a member of the Ho Wang company, twice for an unfriendly tong and three times for any suspicious act of the policeman whose eagle eye was frequently turned in that direction.

It was getting late and all was quiet, so the guard on the inside pulled a piece of roast pork from his sleeve and was about to eat when the bell rang once. He slipped the pork back into place and admitted four men, of middle age and prosperous appearance.

The first was Ah King, straight as an arrow, shrewd as a fox and strong in the faith that Chinatown was for the Chinese. He wore a

green silk blouse, decorated under his queue with a grease spot, the size of a breakfast plate. Ho Lung followed on his heels and answered to the same description,—a little deeper concentration of thought had turned his eyes a little more toward the nose; a little more taste in the selection of his silken trousers had given him a superior air; but far underlying all surface appearances, was the real Chinaman who lives forever and changes not. The other two men followed in single file, and the odor of the Far East came in with them and sat with them at the table.

The little party talked about the affairs of the Ho Wang company, the latest news from home, the price of vegetables and so forth, and then drifted off upon the exclusion act.

"Our friend Quong Lung has had a stormy voyage," remarked Ah King, as he poured hot water into a padded teapot.

"Yes," assented Ho Lung, "the God of Fate has brought him into trouble."

Just here the third voice piped up, "The signs were not right when he sailed. A man should not go to sea when the sign of the zodiac is in Taurus."

"Oh, I do not concern myself so much about the signs," said Ah King, "living in San Francisco for ten years makes a man begin to doubt them, but it cannot be denied that the times were inauspicious. The trouble with the Boxers drove so many missionaries on board that Quong Lung could not keep aloof and as a result they have brought him into trouble."

"Yes," agreed Ho Lung, "but I still believe that the Gods have much to do with our troubles. We all lie bound upon the wheel of fate."

After this remark there was silence for a time and then conversation turned upon poli-

tics—the politics of Chinatown, a brand quite distinct from that of the white man; a wheel within a wheel, so to speak, which goes one way while the main wheel goes another. They had not entered very fully upon the subject, however, when a party of five, all young men and of slightly modified type, came in. These were American born; had been educated in the public schools and attended the mission church. They swore in English but returned to the mother tongue to express shades of meaning not within the scope of their adopted language. "Pidgen" they rigidly ignored, as they also did the western style of dress. Garments cut to show the outline of the figure were as much an indecency to them as they had been to their fathers. They took seats and as Quong Lung had not yet arrived, they listened respectfully to the conversation of their elders.

"Business is good," resumed Ah King, "the

books of the company show that at the New Year's festival, every man had money to burn to his ancestors."

"Yes," said Fo Lung, who kept an employment office, "the demand for labor is greater than the supply."

"Ah yes," said Ah King, "it is too difficult for our people to get here; the United States government discriminates against us. The exclusion act, the high tariff and the demand for the open door, is a trinity of inconsistencies. The duty on pickled eggs is now five cents a dozen and the duty on dried mushrooms is equally high."

Just then another party of Quong Lung's friends, among whom was the "peace talker", Ah Foon, arrived and seated themselves at the table. Ah Foon was a character unique in Chinatown. Whenever there was a difference of opinion among his countrymen, he threw

himself into the breach for the purpose of adjusting it. On occasions of serious rupture, he had been known to prostrate himself, first to one side and then to the other, in the interests of peace. Among Chinamen he seldom failed to make amicable arrangements; but he had learned, after some experience, that the white man adjusts his differences in quite another way. To their methods he had, therefore, given considerable attention. He had found that testimony was an important item in settling disputes; and had frequently furnished his attorney such evidence as was required to win his case. In short he had become so skillful in this way that he only needed a clear idea of what was wanted to be able to produce it. Especially had he looked into habeas corpus procedure and felt a degree of confidence that he could supply the kind of testimony required by the court.

"What thinkest thou about Quong Lung's getting his girls ashore?" asked Ho Lung of Ah Foon, as the conversation lagged.

"I hope there will be no trouble," replied he, "there are several ways to arrange it. If a good man should be on the wharf in the morning, it will be an easy matter; if not, he must go to the court of the white devil. In these courts it often happens that the wisest cannot hold his own with the most ignorant, but we must meet that state of things by resorting to such tactics as our attorney advises."

Ah Kee still suspended judgment. He had left the fatherland but a short time before, arrived in Canada and thence found his way by slow degrees to San Francisco.

The next subject that came under discussion was the price of girls.

"Why there is so much trouble about getting our women folk here, is a mystery to me," said

Ho Lung, "the last wife I bought cost me twelve hundred dollars, and when Quong Lung gets his little beauty ashore, he will probably want as much as two thousand for her. In China one can get all the girls he wants for one or two hundred apiece. It is this outrageous exclusion law that makes it so hard to get wives."

To the surprise of the elderly men, a dissenting voice was now raised. Hi Su, one of the young men, arose to his feet and said,

"I respect the ways of my ancestors and I love the fatherland; but I believe it is time for us to learn to obey the laws of our adopted country. I have but one wife and I think the buying of slaves to be a sin. I also obey the municipal council of Chinatown so long as it does not come in conflict with the laws of the state,—but further than that, I do not go."

"Yes," chimed in Sam Sing, another of the

young men, "I also have but one wife and I send my daughters to school, just the same as I do my sons."

These sentiments of the young men were regarded by their elders as evidence that loyalty to the fatherland was fading away, and that the habits of the grimy barbarian were becoming rooted in their lives. They meditated for a time on what seemed to them the retrogression of their fellows, after which Ho Lung rose to the occasion.

"Can love of home be like the love of a child for a butterfly? Have the ages written their story in lines of soft repose upon the Chinaman's face, only to be wiped out as footsteps out of sand by an incoming tide? Does the lifting up of the hands to the ancestral shrine mean nothing to us because we are away from home? Young Chinamen who find themselves drifting from the customs of their fathers,

should bow their heads and pay reverence to the nation that has lived to see all others take their places among the dead."

For some moments after this burst of eloquence a deep silence pervaded the room; the incense lay in sheets along the wall, and no one seemed equal to the occasion, but soon Lo Ling arose and recounted some reminiscences of the fatherland.

"At home the old father and mother live in the house and the sons and all the sons' wives take care of them. Here parents and grandparents have no place; they are not reverenced by their daughters-in-law."

Silenced by this high morality, the whole party dreamed again of home and friends and native land.

The arrival of Quong Lung aroused them and brought them to a realization of the duties of the hour. Blessed with the marvelous capa-

city of his race to adjust itself to all the conditions of life, Quong Lung had gone, upon his arrival to a barber shop and had his head shaven, his queue lengthened and his trousers pressed. No sign told of the storm that raged within him, no shadow lingered to proclaim his discomfort. The most scrutinizing could only see the pleasure of a man who, after long voyaging, had arrived in port.

When the sentinel at the door announced him, each member of the party arose and courteously inquired after his welfare. For some he had messages, for others packages and for all the kindly greeting of a well-bred man. No attempt was made by him to arouse sympathy or to introduce the subject nearest his heart. A delightful evening was spent and at three o'clock in the morning, the guests took their departure.

Ah Foon, the peace talker, however, re-

mained at the side of Quong Lung. Left to themselves, the two men waived ceremony and began in earnest the business of the night.

"Be seated, noble brother," said Quong Lung, as he drew a chair to the table, "be seated; it is good to feel thee near. All is well with thee, I hope?"

"All is well, thanks to Ten Wang," replied Ah Foon.

"Thou hast heard of the little episode at the ship as I attempted to land my slaves?"

"Yes," quoth Ah Foon, "heard it with sorrow; it is an unfortunate affair. The exclusion act makes it difficult for us to gather our families about us, in this land of the free."

"Yes, the law of the white man is directed against the Mongolian," replied Quong Lung.

"I fear thou art correct, most noble brother," assented Ah Foon.

"The business in which I am engaged has the

sanction of our own people, as thou knowest, but the western man hampers us and makes it necessary that we meet him as best we can. My attorney advises me that the landing of the girls is now a matter of testimony. The members of the Ho Wang company are sworn, as thou knowest, to stand together and give bold counterstrokes to all who persecute them. Here is Sam Shu, let us drink to the confusion of the white man's laws."

They drank and drank again and pledged eternal friendship. Then Quong Lung drew a gold piece from his purse and offered it to Ah Foon, saying,

"Bestow it upon whomsoever thou knowest to be in need, that the Gods may see that we have no evil in our hearts."

"No, no, the coin I will not accept," said Ah Foon, "but if I can be of service, thou knowest I shall be most willing."

"It is to thee that I look for assistance," said Quong Lung.

"Has your attorney, the white devil, informed you what the law requires you to prove?" questioned Ah Foon, as he proceeded to light more joss sticks.

"Yes," replied Quong Lung, "we must conform to the language of the exclusion act, which simply requires us to prove that Ah Moy was born in the United States. My astute counsel says there will be no trouble about landing the half-breed."

"And what is the price thou wouldst pay for this testimony?"

"Such as is commensurate with the exigencies of the case," replied Quong Lung. "Is it sufficient if I return to thee the note that I hold, for one hundred dollars?"

"The note, I would fain pay in coin," said Ah Foon.

"Then you must name your price and not be too hard on a man who is in trouble," said Quong Lung.

"It is a serious business and I would not mention less than two hundred dollars," answered the peace talker.

"What thou wilt do, thou wilt do," said Quong Lung, and they filled their pipes and drank again to the confusion of the white man's laws.

It was near daybreak when they left the building with a mutual understanding to meet at the wharf at nine o'clock.

At the mission house on Jackson street there was also night work on hand. Upon leaving the ship, Brother Jones had gone straight to this place and informed the inmates of the situation at the wharf. He believed the girls to be slaves and with a well-intentioned aggressiveness, he called upon his co-workers to swear

a new oath, even an oath to rescue the slave girls. As soon as he described Quong Lung, they all understood that they had a foe worthy of their steel. Many an encounter had they had with him, and many a time had he slipped through the meshes of the law. Although it was long past office hours, they sent for their attorney and made such preparations as the exigencies of the case required.

Brother Jones accepted the hospitality of the home for the night, and as the clock in the old church tower was striking two, his light flickered out.

CHAPTER XIV.

"Though the current be swift,
It can ne'er carry off,
The moonbeam that lights up its bed.
Though the mountain be high,
Still it cannot arrest,
The fast flying cloud overhead."

—*Lu Chu Chi.*

Not until the passengers had all left the ship did the girls begin to realize their situation. For a time they looked, wonder-eyed, into the desolation about them and then they went back to the second cabin which was to them the most home-like spot in the great vessel. Even the packages that had filled all of the available space would now have been a welcome sight, but one by one these had been carried away until now the only familiar object was the pile of Chinese coffins just opposite the port hole.

"I wish we were shut up in one of them," said Ah Moy, "then we should be sure of getting back to lie with our ancestors in the family burial ground."

"Oh dear no, that would be too dreadful!" exclaimed Wing. But they were too much alarmed for much conversation and sat in gloomy silence until the steward brought them supper. He laughed at them and joked about Quong Lung's mishap, as though it were an every-day occurrence for two unhappy girls to be left alone on a great ship.

"Come and take a walk on deck," he said, when they refused the food he offered. But they shook their heads and very soon went frightened to bed.

The morning dawned cold and windy and the fog horn bellowed its hoarse warnings to the children of the sea. The crew staggered back, somewhat the worse for having spent a

night on shore, and everything on the ship showed signs of disorder.

A few Chinamen came early to the wharf to select boxes and bundles, but always went back before the girls could get a word with them.

"What shall we do," said Wing, "if no one comes for us?"

"Alas, I cannot answer," returned Ah Moy.

"Do you suppose they will take us back to China, or will they throw us overboard to be eaten by fishes," again queried Wing.

Before them was a bowl of rice that had been left by the steward and opposite it a paper joss which one of their countrymen in the exuberance of his joy had forgotten. Ah Moy set the rice before the sacred emblem as though it might, in some mysterious way, appease the wrath of an angry God.

It was ten o'clock when a shaft of sunlight

flashed through the port hole and told the girls that the fog had cleared and the day was beautiful. Just then a Chinese servant came in to gather up the sheets and pillow cases and Wing mustered up courage to inquire of him what was likely to happen to them.

"Tell me, oh tell me, what those people will do with us," she said.

"I do not know," he answered kindly. "I think Quong Lung will some pretty soon." Before he had finished speaking there was a clatter of light footsteps on the stairs and a party of women came down. They expressed great pleasure at finding the girls, and sat down and chatted so pleasantly that the slaves felt sure the ladies had come in their behalf. This hope lightened their fears and they smiled as the ladies made reference to them.

Soon another figure, which they both rejoiced to see, came down the stairs. It was no

other than Dr. Richardson. Wing sprang into her arms and nestled her head upon her bosom, and the doctor looked down upon her as a mother looks upon her own.

"This is thé half-breed girl of whom you have heard," explained she to her associates.

"Yes, doctor," said Miss Stevens, who was matron of the missionary home, "I see you have been at work on your voyage and I am inclined to yield the palm to you."

"Well," said the doctor, "I see the angel that is imprisoned in this block of stone and I would fain be the instrument, in the hands of God, of liberating it."

"Yes, but we who have been in the work the longest and can read the symptoms, are rather doubtful," said Miss Stevens.

"We make sad mistakes about symptoms," replied the doctor, "the uneasy longings of the Eurasian, as a class, may as well be

symptoms of genius, or of mighty love, as symptoms of evil. I fear the idea of our own superiority is a thin romance upon which we have fed until it has warped our judgment."

This sharp repartee was an offense to Miss Stevens, who replied:

"I prefer your prescriptions, doctor, to your religious opinions."

But she turned and, looking squarely into the doctor's face, asked,

"What can you do for the girl?"

"Why," explained the doctor, "first save her from Quong Lung and then save her from herself."

"She is of a class hard to manage," said the missionary, "we have them occasionally at the home and they are apt to make trouble; the other one is easily saved."

"The other one is already saved," responded the doctor rather tartly, "she has behind her

ages upon ages of virtuous ancestors and she does not need our help."

At this moment the steward came and requested them all to go on deck and meet the inspectors. The whole party arose and tripped lightly up the stairs, followed by the doctor who still held Wing fast by the hand. As they walked toward the gang plank they saw a number of uniformed officials in close conversation with Brother Jones, while a little apart stood Quong Lung and the peace talker, Ah Foon. A Chinese interpreter instructed the girls to hand over their passports to the inspector; this they understood and, without hesitation, obeyed. He was a kindly, well-fed man, this official, and he smiled upon the girls as they timidly presented their papers.

"The law works cruelty upon such as these," he said, "at the same time unfolding the transcript of the Kwan Yin record. He read

the document carefully, and with a perplexed look, handed it to his brother inspector who also read it.

"It is certainly unusual. I do not remember ever to have seen anything like it. It may be all right, but I should not be willing to let her go ashore without consulting someone higher in authority than myself."

"Yes," agreed the first inspector, "Quong Lung is a shrewd fellow and we might be misled by some of his tricks."

They then unfolded Ah Moy's passport.

"This one is all right," said the first inspector, "I remember that when Quong Lung went away he took a young woman with him."

"It may be all right, but I think we ought to be very careful. We have made a number of mistakes in these matters, and I do not like to take the responsibility."

Then turning to Ah Moy, he asked:

"Can you remember where you were born, little one?"

Ah Moy made no reply, but Quong Lung and his friend, Ah Foon, threw themselves into the breach and declared that she was born in California. Here Brother Jones interrupted:

"It cannot be, I have seen too many Chinamen to believe a word of it."

Thus the two forces met and clashed and the inspectors, not knowing what to do, very wisely decided to do nothing.

But Doctor Richardson volunteered to look for Wing's father and promised if she found him to report to the main office on Washington street. This was a little light on a dark subject and finally the inspectors gave both girls into her charge.

It was now near noon and as there seemed to be no other way out of the dilemma, the doctor decided to take the girls to the mission home.

The inspector accompanied the little party to the street and placed them all in a carriage.

As they were rapidly whirled away Ah Moy saw Quong Lung and Ah Foon standing, in close conversation, at the foot of the wharf. In her simple little heart, she thought that Ah Foon was the rich merchant who was waiting to make her his wife. She saw in the one short moment as they passed him, that his clothing was of heavy silk and that his stockings were spotlessly white, and she remembered the pang that she felt when she saw Ting Ho march past her father's gate to be no more seen forever. She remembered, too, the story of the great dragon that carries off little girls and she wondered if she were not even now going to the cave of the infant ghosts to build sand towers to be blown away by the wind.

But although great waves of sorrow swept through her heart, she sat motionless, waiting

to obey any voice which should point out a way through the darkness that surrounded her, while in sharp contrast sat Wing, weeping and clinging to Dr. Richardson.

It was but a few moments drive to the Home and before they had time to understand what was going on, the heavy doors of the mission closed upon them. Although the ladies were very kind they took the girls to a secure room, beyond danger of ingress or egress; for they had learned by past experience to allow no opportunity for escape.

An assistant helped the girls to wash and readjust their clothing, but she was a Cantonese and no conversation could be entered upon. She treated them kindly, however, and when they were ready, led them to a large room where there were many Chinese girls. None of these spoke the language of the Honan Province, but the kindness in their manner and

the happy look in their faces, allayed the fears of the slaves and they soon began to look about the building which seemed palatial to them. The wonderful conveniences of water and gas, the large rooms, the spring beds appeared marvels of luxury. The piano, so much larger than any musical instrument they had ever seen before, astonished them, and when a class of girls lifted up their voices and sang with it, they laughed quite merrily.

After an hour or so in the parlor, they arose and signified to one of the girls that they would like to return to their room and, after bowing three times very gracefully withdrew.

When they were safely in their room, Ah Moy said to Wing:

"How it all happens, I cannot tell, but these are the very same kind of people that I used to see near my old home and my father liked them not."

"But," said Wing, "they are kind, and my doctor is good. I wonder if they are all like her."

"My father used to say they were all alike," answered Ah Moy rather dubiously.

All day the girls tried to lift the veil which had so mysterious fallen across their way. They talked of Quong Lung and his friend; of the long sea-voyage and the fruit and flowers of Hawaii and as the moon came out and the roar of the great city began to hush, Ah Moy heard the bells of the old Tien Dong calling the saints to prayer. In her uncomplaining sorrow, she loosened her long black hair and with soft, proud eyes, turned her face to the east.

No thought had she of blaming any one for the sorrow that had come upon her; no thought had she of asking God to lighten her burden. To face a sea of troubles and to act rightly her

part, in the complex relation she bore to it, was the realization of her Oriental training, and if all failed, to use the knife—the knife that her father had given her, the knife that was always in her sleeve. A vague swarm of spirits called to her from out of the past, counseling her to acquit herself so as to honor her family name.

Thus the night and another day wore away and early the following morning a Chinese maid came to the door and offered to assist them to dress, for it was now Sunday and all must be prepared for the morning service. She could not make herself very clearly understood, but she succeeded in dressing them neatly and in taking them down to breakfast in time.

Miss Stevens knew how to assuage the grief in human hearts and she allowed the girls to assist in the work, especially in the arrangement of the flowers. Before eleven o'clock there came a number of Chinamen with hymn

books in their hands, who gathered around the piano to practice the hymns that were to be used in the service and to assist in arranging the chairs and other details. The leader of the choir was a pretty young lady who chatted with the singers and received presents in the form of tea and silk and sometimes of more substantial things. The deadly discords they made and the Cantonese they jabbered between the hymns only elicited from her a laugh, or a command to try it again. No objection was made to joss sticks or Buddhas printed on silk handkerchiefs; for experience had taught the missionaries that toleration was a law they must obey.

Precisely at eleven o'clock, Brother Jones opened the service with prayer. After thanking the Heavenly Father for their safe arrival and for all the blessings of life, he alluded to the great struggle going on in China and gave a

resume of the work of the missionaries in that country. Then he closed by asking the gentle Jesus to visit His wrath upon the slave dealer. A dangerous sense of humor came twinkling into the eyes of the Chinamen; but they suppressed it and kept a kindly bearing toward their visitor.

After the service, Miss Stevens very adroitly cut short any discussion by inviting all present into the dining room to partake of a cup of tea.

"The work here has taught me," she said to a friend, "that it is hopeless to argue."

"Yes," said the lady who had herself been in the service, "Chinamen cannot conceive of Jesus as a God of Vengeance."

Poor Brother Jones! His illusion about retribution clung to him like garments long worn. With a mind biting at every creed, except his own, the Chinese seemed to him like so many insects and he winced under the com-

promises that he saw the missionaries making.

The two girls watched the strange service and the luncheon that followed it and saw the congregation depart without evincing a shadow of surprise. It was Ah Moy's idea of a well bred girl to "keep the face" and Wing followed her example with exceeding cunning. Although they felt that they were objects of comment, they managed to appear very much at ease. A number of women called during the afternoon and asked to see the girls, and one richly attired lady proposed to adopt them; but Miss Stevens informed her that, for the present at least, they had no jurisdiction over them.

"They are slaves," she said, "and sometimes we are obliged to leave these matters to the courts."

"But is there no way to compel the courts?" asked the lady.

"No," replied Miss Stevens, "unfortunately, the courts can compel us."

In this way a week slipped by and the girls were becoming accustomed to their surroundings. The pale faces and blue eyes had no more terrors for them and although they could not understand all that went on about them, confidence was growing and the fact that they were occupied with useful duties began to make them feel at home. When they were entrusted with dainty work their nimble fingers never tired until it was finished and a smile of approbation received.

But another day brought a surprise for the whole family. Not only the girls, but all the missionaries were thrown into the greatest possible excitement by the arrival of Dr. Richardson, who came to inform them that the father of Wing had lately died and left a large fortune. They could hardly believe it when the doctor intimated that, in all probability, Wing was more than a millionaire, "for," said she,

"Ukiah Grant lost his wife some years before his own death and there are no children except Wing to inherit."

When Wing saw the doctor she flew into her arms, although not able to comprehend the news. Miss Stevens, however, grasped the situation at once.

"The most practical thing you can do now," said she, "is to apply to the court for letters of guardianship and, if successful, try your theories upon your protege. But," she added, "that would interfere with your work in China."

"My work in China is finished," answered the doctor, "I have seen enough to convince me that my duty is to my own people. I hear the call of the Aryan race and it is a call of distress. I hear it and its echo, and I should be less than a patriot if I did not respond."

"Let us pray for success," said Miss Stevens

doubtfully, "but you know the difficulties, do you not?"

"Yes, I know there are difficulties, but I see beyond them. If my services are of any value to mankind, it must be along the line of teaching the meaning of that great symbol, the serpent, as it is taught to the children of Asia."

Again Miss Stevens said doubtingly, "Let us pray for success. But what is your plan about Wing?"

"Just what you outlined in your first remark," replied the doctor, "I intend to apply to the courts for letters of guardianship and, if successful, to educate her for a medical missionary. It is the noblest of work and it would be poetic justice, would it not, to see the abandoned child of lust turn upon the vice that is gnawing at her throat and help stamp it out."

"Good has come out of Nazareth," said Miss Stevens, "perhaps it will again."

Dr. Richardson had now fully determined upon her course. She took her departure, but next morning was early at the home with a new suit of clothes and the never-to-be-forgotten umbrella of the Chinese woman. As soon as Wing was suitably dressed, she took her to the Probate Court and had her name entered as the daughter of Ukiah Grant.

There was much surprise, and adverse claimants protested, but Quong Lung had done his work too well to admit of a doubt. The transcript signed, sealed and delivered by Woo Chow, in his official capacity as recorder of the Kwan Yin temple, was easily verified by the Chinese minister plenipotentiary, and the judge, glad enough to see a way out of the wrangle that distant relatives had begun over the property, recognized Wing as the daughter of the dead millionaire.

CHAPTER XV.

APOLOGIA.

"In vain hands bent on sacrifice,
Or clasped in prayer, we see,
The ways of God are not exactly
What those ways should be.
The swindler and the ruffian
Lead pleasant lives enough,
While judgment overtakes the good,
With many a sharp rebuff.
The swaggering bully stalks along,
As swaggering as you please,
While those who never miss their prayers
Are martyrs to disease.
So if great God Almighty fails
To keep the balance true,
What can we hope that paltry,
Mortal magistrates will do."

—Hsi Chin, A. D. 1369.

Another week had passed. Wing had gone away with Dr. Richardson; and Ah Moy had settled down and was helping the girls with the

sweeping and the dusting, while a few words of English were creeping into her vocabulary. Miss Stevens had almost concluded that Quong Lung had given up the fight, when one morning, just as she was marshaling the week's work into order, the bell was rung by a pompous looking official.

Out of his side pocket projected a package of legal documents which he instinctively grasped as the door was opened by a demure little Chinese girl.

"Can I see the person in authority here," he asked at the same time setting one foot firmly over the threshold.

"Do you mean Miss Wilkins, or the matron?" timidly asked the girl.

"I mean the person in authority," replied the official, in such a tone that Sin Soy's almond shaped eyes instinctively turned toward her nose.

"Then you may be seated, sir, and I will look for the matron."

The official took the chair nearest the door and Sin Soy fled through the hall toward that part of the house where she thought Miss Stevens most likely to be found.

"He looks like a policeman," she said, as she rushed into the dining room, "he looks like a policeman and he wants to see you."

Miss Stevens threw off the long white apron she was wearing, ran one hand hurriedly over her hair, and proceeded to the sitting room. She was not altogether surprised when her visitor served her with an order of court.

"Have you in your charge a Chinese girl, lately arrived, whom they call Ah Moy," he asked.

"I have," replied the matron, slightly flushing. At this the officer, handing her a copy of the writ of Habeas Corpus, said:

"Then you must bring her into court that the judge may decide to whom she shall be given. She is claimed by Quong Lung as his daughter, is she not?"

"I presume she is," replied Miss Stevens, "but is there no escape from this proceeding? My duties are pressing and the uncertainty of justice makes—"

"These are questions for the court to decide," interrupted the officer, "the order is mandatory and must be obeyed."

Saying this, he tipped his hat and descended the steps to the street.

As soon as he was gone, Miss Stevens gathered her little band of assistants together and they decided that there was no way to escape the ordeal of again going into court.

"We must trust the good Father," said Miss Wilkins.

"And our lawyer," dryly remarked Miss Jones.

"If we could only send her away," lamented Miss Stevens, "we have so many friends in Los Angeles who would have kept her out of sight, but we should have done it sooner. Now that the papers are served, I fear it is too late."

Miss Jordan, another missionary now suggested that they send for Brother Jones.

"None of us have any testimony to give in the case," said she, "at least no such testimony as a court requires. To be sure we know, but to tell the court how we know is another thing."

In the midst of their discussion Brother Jones came in. He had heard of the trouble and knew that he should be an important witness. But when he thought the matter over seriously, he saw that he could only swear that Quong Lung looked Cantonese, while Ah Moy looked every inch northern born. Some of the missionaries believed in the "blessed lie," but now that the time was ripe to put this into

practice, it seemed very difficult to do. Quong Lung's attorney had the reputation of being one of the best in the city and they knew he would pour such hot shot upon the witnesses on cross examination that the truth would be their only protection.

The fact that they could not speak understandingly with Ah Moy made the situation still more difficult and taking it all in all there seemed no silver lining to the cloud. So they reluctantly proceeded to prepare Ah Moy for the court. A Chinese inmate of the home arranged her dress in a way suitable for the occasion and other inmates vied with each other in lending such articles of adornment as are dear to the heart of girlhood. Ah Moy submitted with calm reserve, but in her heart of hearts there was sorrow lest she should never again see Quong Lung and the rich merchant whom she felt sure was waiting to make her his

wife. All the distance between China and San Francisco was not so fatal to her happiness as the one wall between the mission Home and Chinatown; and she felt while being dressed that, if an opportunity presented itself, she should rush to the arms of her own people.

The missionaries had fears that their little bird might fly away at the slightest provocation, and took a close carriage, guarding her on both sides, as they rattled over the cobble-stone streets to the great building where law—and sometimes justice—is administered. The judge was disposing of another case when Miss Stevens and Miss Wilkins, one on either side of the Chinese girl, entered. The marshal saw them and conducted them to seats within the rail.

Very soon Quong Lung and his friend, Ah Foon, entered the room and were about to take seats near the missionaries; but the marshal

motioned the Chinamen back and they were obliged to remain at a respectful distance.

The court room was filled with a throng made up of all sorts and conditions of men—a throng as unlike the gatherings to which the missionaries were accustomed, as a church congregation is unlike the crowd at a race course. Men of the criminal type, tramps, and women with diamond hat pins occupied the available seats. To all appearance, the stately judge was oblivious to everything except the doings of a little circle of lawyers before him, who were reviewing the testimony in a murder case which had just been tried. An attorney whom his brethren at the bar addressed affectionately as "General" called the attention of the court to the perverseness of the witnesses for the prosecution and, according to his version, all who had testified against his client had done so from pure malice.

"I should not have undertaken this case," said he, in the language which constitutes the eloquence of the bar, "only that I feel, for the honor of the law, that every accused person should have the opportunity to clear his skirts of a criminal charge."

He reviewed the testimony and the case had lumbered along for an hour, when the "General" drew a little nearer to the jury box and ran his eye, for one strained moment, along the line of twelve men.

"I need not remind you, gentlemen of the jury," he said, "of the awful tyranny of a miscarriage of justice. In a case like this where the testimony is almost entirely circumstantial, it is your bounden duty to give the benefit of every doubt to the prisoner. The law requires that there must be no assumption of crime; but a chain of flawless, clear-cut and incontrovertible proof." Then, moving still nearer, he

launched himself into the realm of fiction and drew a picture of the agony and helplessness of the man whose life they held in their hands. He painted in glowing colors the vine-clad and blossom-scented home from whence his client came and he sketched at its window, a wife with white, clenched hands. Then he turned their vision backward to a Christian mother whose grey hairs would go down to the grave in sorrow unless they restored to her her son, and concluded by saying:

"Gentlemen of the jury, it is for you to decide this momentous question of guilty or not guilty. The responsibility is upon you to say whether this man shall be launched into the darkness of the tomb or whether he shall return to the bosom of his family. I leave it to you, believing in your judgment and trusting in your mercy."

The large audience had been spell-bound by

this eloquence and sat with bated breath. The eyes of the two missionaries scanned the prisoner with an expression of sympathy and interest. They had lost their impatience at the delay and sat with others, anxiously awaiting the return of the jury. The suspense was of short duration, however, for in less than ten minutes the twelve men filed slowly back and the voice of their foreman rang out clear and loud:

"Not guilty, your Honor."

A breath of relief swept the assemblage; the attorneys gathered about the "General" to congratulate him, and the crowd, after long and loud cheering, moved slowly toward the door.

Miss Stevens and Miss Wilkins had been greatly impressed with the eloquence of the lawyer and made no attempt to conceal their pleasure at the happy conclusion of the case; but when the "General" came nearer to speak to

their own attorney upon a matter of business, the pedestal on which he stood began to fall to pieces. A dissipated breath, a shrewd glance of the eye and a familiar, "how are you, Mr. Brown," called their attention to him and in another moment they heard their attorney say, in a jocular way:

"That was well done, General; it was about the only thing you could do for your client, for the testimony was all against you."

"Yes," respondent the "General," "that fellow was as guilty as Satan, and all I could do was to work upon the sympathies of the jury."

"I suppose you got your fee in advance," said Mr. Brown.

"Yes, I am always on the safe side, so far as that goes," replied the eloquent one, "can I do anything for you in the matter you have in hand?"

"No; my case is only a trifling affair—one

of those Chinese slave girls, you know; but I want to see you this afternoon about Higgins vs. Higgins; there is a good ten thousand dollars involved in that case."

Miss Stevens turned as pale as ashes.

"What can we expect from our pathetic little case in a place like this?" she said to Miss Wilkins.

"Nothing; I am afraid, nothing," was the answer.

By this time the court room was nearly deserted and the only disturbing sound was the chatter of a dozen Chinese who had dropped in to see how Quong Lung would get out of his trouble. The judge, who had retired for a few moments to his chambers, returned, the sheriff shouted "silence" and immediately the case of Quong Lung versus the Occidental Board of Missions was called. Both attorneys were ready and the witnesses came forward to testify.

Quong Lung was the first to take the stand. He testified clearly and pointedly that Ah Moy was his daughter, twenty years old, and born in California. Upon cross examination, he kept his story straight and told it convincingly.

"I came to California in 1872," he said in response to the inquiry of the attorney for the missionaries.

"How many wives did you bring with you?" asked he with the air of a man who has caught the witness in a lie.

"Three wives; all the time large family, —all the time plenty of trouble with the missionaries."

"That's all," replied the lawyer, "we do not want to hear anything about your troubles."

Then Ah Foon was sworn and testified that he had known Ah Moy from babyhood and that she was the daughter of Quong Lung, born in California and twenty years old.

A look of satisfaction beamed on the face of Quong Lung's attorney as he turned the witness over to Mr. Brown for cross examination, for he knew by long experience how hopeless would be any attempt on the part of the defendants to go very far into the family life of Quong Lung, or any other resident of Chinatown.

"No questions," said the lawyer, seeing how difficult his case was getting. At this, with a businesslike air, the attorney for the plaintiff handed the judge what purported to be the passport of Ah Moy. The judge read the paper over very carefully and said: "It seems to be in conformity with the law. Let us hear the witnesses for the defense."

Brother Jones now stepped forward, but something in his manner seemed to be asking for lenity. He swore that he was a passenger on the Hong Kong Maru and that he had only known Ah Moy for the short period of twenty-

seven days. He thought she was a slave, because she appeared to be northern bred, while according to his judgment, Quong Lung was clearly Cantonese.

"It was common talk on the ship that Quong Lung was a slave dealer," said he.

"Objected to," said the attorney for Quong Lung, "on the ground that it is incompetent, immaterial and irrelevant."

"Objection sustained," ruled the judge, "tell what you know of your own personal knowledge."

Then Brother Jones had to admit that of his own personal knowledge, he knew nothing. Neither could Miss Stevens, or Miss Wilkins, say anything to help the case. They requested that Ah Moy be put on the stand to testify through an interpreter; but the judge objected on the ground of her having no knowledge of the solemnity of an oath. But he took her to

his chambers and there tried to elicit from her something to guide him in his decision. Owing to the fact, however, that his conscience had been reduced, by a purely legal process, to a tacit desire to fulfill the letter of the law, nothing but such considerations came to his mind. As far as anything could be wrung from Ah Moy, the facts were just as Quong Lung had declared them to be. The sight of the foreigners did not frighten her as it had done at first and she could now remember the words, "born in California". These she repeated parrot-like and then became a perfect blank. No smile nor frown could wring from her another word. The repose of her bearing and her persistent refusal to talk confirmed the judge in his opinion that everything was as it should be, and he decided to let her go with whomsoever she pleased.

"I see nothing in the case to warrant suspicion," he said.

But the missionaries, the people standing about the room and even the janitor knew that another slave girl had been added to those already in Chinatown.

CHAPTER XVI.

"My half-exhausted draught hath nothing left
But thick and muddy dregs. Fatigued, bereft,
I pant and ask a cooling glass;
But like a broken wheel, men's scorn and jest,
I rise and sink with none to answer my
request."

Poem by a celebrated general on his banishment from his native land. Translated for the Royal Asiatic Society, at Shanghai.

As soon as the judge had rendered his decision, Quong Lung made a bold advance to where Ah Moy was seated and Ah Foon followed him, as the wolf follows in the jungle path.

"Come to me," said Quong Lung, with determination in his voice, and Ah Moy made not the slightest attempt to disobey. He took her hand and led her out of the court room, while Ah Foon took his place as rear guard.

"It is uncertain business," said Ah Foon, when they were safely outside the door.

"Yes," asserted Ah Foon, "but what they will do—they will do—these fierce Americans. To run the gauntlet of the court and succeed is surely better than to run and lose."

Quong Lung smiled a sickly smile. The iron that entered into his soul was the loss of money that he had sustained, first in Wing's escape and second, in the heavy fees that he knew would be wrung from him by his attorney. He made the best of the situation, however, and when a hackman approached and asked if he desired a carriage, he replied by lifting Ah Moy upon the back seat, while he as unceremoniously flung himself upon the seat facing her. When he had instructed the driver where to go, he lowered the curtains and sat sullenly until they reached Chinatown. There he dismissed the hackman and led Ah Moy through a narrow

street and up a flight of stairs to a room known as the old "slave hall." A Chinese woman received her and took her to a smaller room where, on wooden boxes, were arranged all the paraphernalia of female adornment, and immediately began rearranging her hair and dress. She was not cross, this old woman, as Ah Moy remembered Wang to have been; but she knew her business and did it in a most unceremonious manner. Very soon Ah Moy looked her best, according to the Oriental idea, and she was then led back to the hall.

It was not long before Quong Lung returned, accompanied by a number of Chinamen who were anxious to purchase wives. Ah Moy suited the most fastidious of them; but her owner held her at a very high price. For this reason several days passed and no sale was effected.

Meanwhile the newspapers were exploiting

some of the facts about the case, and the judge's decision, and this aroused the fears of Quong Lung that other legal procedure might be instituted. He therefore removed Ah Moy to another place in Chinatown—a place which sees, but tells no tales. Through dark passages and dingy halls, he led the poor girl to a room no larger than a cell and there locked the door upon her. Through the iron bars she could see other rooms like her own, all opening into a hallway, which was lighted only by windows overhead. In each of these little rooms were young women with painted faces and very gay clothing; but as Ah Moy heard them speaking only Cantonese, she could not enter into conversation. From below, throbbing up through the floor, came the squeaky tones of a Sam Sin, the rattle of dice and the odor of opium smoke.

Intuition, which teaches the young and the pure, told Ah Moy that she was now in a dan-

gerous place. She looked about to see if, perchance, she might find a way of escape, but no passage was visible in any direction. As she sat, undecided what to do, she heard a voice in one of the cells near her, crooning a child's song that she had often heard in her own province. Although she could not see the person who was singing, she spoke and asked if there were no way by which she might leave the place.

"No; oh no," was the sad reply, "we are the slaves of Quong Lung, and the only possible way of getting help is to find some one who will carry a message to the missionaries. But this is hard to do, for no one comes here unless he is sworn to secrecy."

"Oh," said Ah Moy, "how dreadful! I have just come from the missionaries and now, how glad I should be to get back to them!"

"They are kind people and would help us, if

they could," answered the voice, "but I have tried many times to get someone to take a message and have never succeeded."

This was discouraging news for little Ah Moy and, almost in despair, she sat down to think over the situation. She drew from her sleeve the knife which her father had given her and fondled it almost as though it were a living thing. Until far into the night she waited uncomplainingly and then, overcome by fatigue and anxiety, she lay down upon the bed and dropped into a troubled sleep. At daybreak she was again listening for the footsteps of Quong Lung whom she still hoped would come and bring her some sort of relief.

It was nearly noon when she heard the key grate in her door and he entered, bringing food and some articles of adornment which he commanded her to wear. He then left her without a word and she sat down alone to her scanty

meal. When she had eaten, she combed her long black hair and again awaited calmly whatever the Gods might have in store for her.

Toward night the outer door was suddenly thrown open and a crowd of men pushed themselves in, scrambling as they did so for standing room before the cells of the prettiest girls. Many of these visitors were stupid with opium and insolent in their language. So much so that Ah Moy felt the blood tingle in her veins and the fire flash in her eyes. One young Chinaman stopped before the cell next to her own and remarked upon the beauty of its occupant and the fineness of the jewelry she wore; jests about her feet and her eyebrows brought laughter from his fellows and then, suddenly, a bold hand pointed to Ah Moy and its owner said:

"This one has only been over a short time and they say she is of noble birth."

"Ah ha!" said another, "then she is the little girl that Quong Lung has had so much trouble over."

"Yes," quoth his companion, "she is still grieving for her parents and it adds much to her beauty."

"She is indeed formed for the offices of love," remarked another, "Quong Lung is a good judge of flesh and blood and I have no doubt he will make money on his investment, notwithstanding his little difficulty with the missionaries."

Ah Moy heard and was now fully conscious of her position. She felt that at any moment some one of that lustful throng might present himself within her door and claim her trembling body. She fled to the furthermost corner of the room and, like a bird caught in a trap, turned her face to the wall.

The bell in the old church tower was striking twelve as she heard the door open behind her and, upon looking around, saw a portly Chinaman. He bore wine and sweets and, with honied words, tried to persuade her to eat. Ah Moy was now too desperate to hear. There was roaring in her ears and darkness in her eyes and she could remember nothing but the story of the old dragon that devours young girls. To her this man was nothing short of such a monster. She clutched at the wall in an effort to escape but, when she felt his hand upon her, she turned upon him with the fury of a wild cat and struck him with the knife, inflicting such a gash on his face that he staggered through the door and disappeared.

It was now near morning. The moon was slipping down over the house tops and the fog fell in cold damp sheets through the grating of her cell. The hall was deserted save for a few

opium eaters who slumbered in a corner, and the only sound Ah Moy could hear was the rattle of an early wagon on the cobble stones of the street.

In sorrow she threw herself down upon the bed and tried to gather her distracted thoughts into something like order. She prayed to the God of her fathers, and she droned a chant that the priests had taught her many years before. This, however, was the crucial test which brought her into a new state of consciousness. When she arose a spiritual illumination shone about the third daughter of Ching Fo. A calm spread over her face and shimmered, like a halo, about her body. In her heart there was no more fear, for she now trusted herself entirely the Gods.

In imagination she heard the gentle voice of her ancestors counseling her to be brave and fear not. She remembered a little poem writ-

ten by Han Hsi two hundred years before Christ, and repeated it aloud:

"Forth from the eastern gate my steed I drive,
And low a cemetery meets my view,
Aspens around in wild luxuriance strive,
The paths are fringed with fir, and pine and yew.
How fast the lights and shadows change to gray,
How like a summer's dream my life has fled,
How a frail life is snuffed away
To sleep in silence with it's coffined dead."

More than ever, the ivory-handled knife seemed a connecting link between herself and her parents. Her father had treasured it and had put it into her hands as a sacred gift, and now strangely, oh so strangely, it had come to pass that it was the only thing she had by which she could cut herself loose from the intricate web of a distracted life.

One loving little letter she scribbled to her father, telling him that she was going, like the daughter of a nobleman, to join the army of her ancestors.

"And, father dear," she wrote, "the Gods have been good to me for I have escaped the worst of all evils—that of disgracing my parents." Then, in noble self-forgetfulness, she added, "and father, you must think better of the missionaries. They tried to save me, but I could not understand." The soul of the Far East was in every word.

That splendid scorn of death which is the result of ancestral training, reaching far back into the remotest night of forgotten time, made her brave and lifted her out of the dark waters that threatened to engulf her. To her the Oriental suicide was now a duty and a sacrament. She knew that the highest honor ever paid to women in her beloved Cathay was paid to those who

successfully protected themselves against dishonor. She folded the sheet of white paper which lay upon the table into the shape of a lotus flower and then, with steady precision, made a gash in her throat from which the blood leaped in throbbing jets.

At ten o'clock they found her stiff and cold, the letter to her father neatly folded on the table, and the knife still in her hand.

THE END.

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